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THE CRIMES OF URBAIN GRANDIER

AND OTHERS

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URBAIN GRANDIER UNDERGOING EXAMINATION UNDER TORTURE

THE CRIMES OF URBAIN GRANDIER

AND OTHERS

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1907

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INTRODUCTION

UPON what principle did Dumas proceed when in 1839 he drew up the list of his heroes and heroines for the *Celebrated Crimes*? He has not told us, nor have we been able to discover; but it would have been astonishing if certain names had proved to be omitted. That of Karl-Ludwig Sand was certain to be found. A few months before, our author had spent three days at Mannheim thoroughly unravelling that pious young gentleman's history, his parentage, birth, upbringing, career as a student, his conception of the crime, execution of it, and his end. The circumstances were as follows:

On the 1st August 1838, Dumas was hard at work upon his romance of the days of Nero, *Acté*, which was nearing its completion when his excellent mother died from paralytic seizure. Dumas was overwhelmed with grief, and work became impossible. On the 20th of the same month he arrived at Brussels with the intention of visiting the whole of Belgium and of returning to France by the banks of the Rhine. Holidays taken in previous years had resulted in the writing of several delightful volumes entitled *Impressions de Voyage*. These on publication were usually enriched by the pencil of his travelling companion, Jadin. On this occasion either Dumas, who did not know German, decided that a linguist was more indispensable than an artist, or the linguist in question—the fascinating actress Ida Ferrier—planned the whole journey and led off her hero. She became Madame Dumas, not at once, but in 1840. At Frankfort, where they stayed a month, making it their headquarters for many excursions, this highly original pair were joined by the poet Gérard de Nerval, who for originality threw them entirely into the shade. It was on one of these excursions and accompanied by the actress

and the poet that Dumas visited Mannheim, the place of the assassination of Kotzebue and of the execution of his murderer Sand. With his invariable good fortune when on his travels, he came across the governor of the prison where Sand was confined and the son of his executioner. Both men gave him valuable materials, and with the assistance of his two friends he made a most full and careful study of his subject. What Sand would have thought of the trio can only be conjectured, but it is probable that, could he have read the result of their labours, he would have been exceedingly well satisfied.

Karl-Ludwig Sand, when he drove a poniard into the heart of Kotzebue, Councillor of the Russian Legation, so far from accomplishing anything for the cause of Young Germany, caused the greatest retrograde movement that had taken place for thirty years. Metternich and Gentz, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia and the Czar, irritated not only by the murder but by the popular canonisation of the murderer as a saint, passed the Resolutions of Karlsbad. Henceforth there was exceptional legislation for the Universities, persecution of persons of Liberal ideas, and censorship of the press. There was no justification for this, for a revolutionary party did not exist. Sand in no way represented the Liberal youth of Germany. To convince themselves of this, the authorities had only to read his journal, in which, by the entry made on December 31st, 1818, he made God not only his accomplice but the instigator of the murder he was about to commit, and the strip of paper which he left lying beside the corpse, on which was written "You too may be a Christ." But the Liberal youth of Germany, then suffering from oppression and espionage, made the mistake of putting a halo round the head of Sand.

Although Dumas' narration ends with the execution of Sand, it is characteristic of him that he is silent respecting the much more important and regrettable events that followed it. Did he not know the contrary, the reader might be excused for supposing that in striking his blow Sand had liberated his country. Another characteristic trait on the part of our author is the amplitude of detail about the execution. The most

impressionable and sympathetic of men, physical suffering had an attraction for him which it is difficult to explain.

The next subject, that of Urbain Grandier, could not well have been omitted by anyone well acquainted with the *causes célèbres* of France. The absolute innocence of Grandier, the dignity and grandeur of his character as contrasted with his petty but triumphant oppressors, with the red-robed figure of Richelieu in the background as the judge of Appeal, so strongly impressed Dumas, that, not contenting himself by writing the chronicle here presented to the reader, he sketched a drama. "Urbain Grandier: drama in five acts, with a prologue, written in collaboration with Auguste Maquet," was first performed at the *Théâtre-Historique* on March 30th, 1850. In the drama many liberties are taken with history: the present work is a faithful record, with which the reader cannot fail to be impressed.

Derues was one of those monsters who can hardly be considered human, and who nowadays would doubtless be pronounced by pathological experts a physical and moral degenerate, and as such hardly accountable for his actions. His name is often pronounced and written *Desrues*, but although this spelling is adopted by the *Biographie universelle*, it is an error, as is proved by papers deposited in the Archives. Perhaps no trial in France in the eighteenth century aroused so much general interest as did that of Derues. Certainly no one was more universally detested than he. In proof of this may be mentioned that a nightcap of peculiar shape generally used at that period completely went out of fashion owing to one of the kind having been worn by this criminal. The life of Derues has been written by the librarian Cailleau and by Arnaud Baculard: as we write a new study is announced by a French publishing-house.

"La Constantin" presents a faithful though curious and dreadful picture of life in Paris in the seventeenth century. We are not aware where the details were obtained, but it is evident that as regards the lengthy conversations indulged in by the persons concerned they were supplemented if not altogether

invented by the lively imagination of the author. We believe that Dumas would claim but a small share in the actual composition of this chronicle, which from internal evidence we should ascribe to his collaborator, A. Arnould.

The study on "The Man in the Iron Mask" which follows is valuable if only as giving up to the time it was published a complete record of all that had been written upon that insoluble mystery. Since then many new theories have been elaborated, but they have always been shown to be incorrect. The present study probably owes more to the researches of Arnould than of Dumas. The conclusion arrived at—that the Man in the Iron Mask was born near the throne—is the one to which Dumas always adhered, and developed with such striking success in "Le Vicomte de Bragelonne"—episode "L'homme au Masque de Fer." This episode was dramatised by him and produced under the title "Le Prisonnier de la Bastille." Hugo's unfinished tragedy, "Les Jumeaux," is on the same subject.

In 1834, Dumas made the acquaintance, in a *salle d'armes*, of a certain Italian general who had taken part in the trial of Murat in 1815 and the revolution of Naples in 1820. He was named a member of the military commission which judged the ex-king, and he alone voted against the sentence of death. This conduct was considered treasonable, and the general, then a captain, was sent into exile. He returned some little while before the revolution of 1820 burst out. Prince Francis dissimulating, appeared to side with the revolutionists, and one of his acts which gave him their confidence was the choice he made of our captain to command a division of the army to march against the Austrians. His soldiers deserted him, the general returned to Naples, and was presently followed by the Austrians. Then the prince, judging it useless to dissimulate further, exiled the men to whom a short time before he had given commissions. Dumas, who made friends with the general when fencing with him, determined to elicit all he knew respecting Murat, and finally succeeded in doing so. It is to this circumstance that Murat owes his place in the *Crimes Célèbres*.

R. S. GARNETT

URBAIN GRANDIER

URBAIN GRANDIER

1634

CHAPTER I

ON Sunday, the 26th of November 1631, there was great excitement in the little town of Loudun, especially in the narrow streets which led to the church of Saint-Pierre in the market-place from the gate by which the town was entered by anyone coming from the direction of the abbey of Saint-Jouin-les-Marmes. This excitement was caused by the expected arrival of a personage who had been much in people's mouths latterly in Loudun, and about whom there was such difference of opinion that discussion on the subject between those who were on his side and those who were against him was carried on with true provincial acrimony. It was easy to see, by the varied expressions on the faces of those who turned the door-steps into improvised debating clubs, how varied were the feelings with which the man would be welcomed who had himself formally announced to friends and enemies alike the exact date of his return.

About nine o'clock a kind of sympathetic vibration ran through the crowd, and with the rapidity of a flash of lightning the words, "There he is! there he is!" passed from group to group. At this cry some withdrew into their houses and shut their doors and darkened their windows, as if it were a day of public mourning, while others opened them wide, as if to let joy enter. In a few moments the uproar and confusion evoked by the news was succeeded by the deep silence of breathless curiosity.

Then, through the silence, a figure advanced, carrying a branch of laurel in one hand as a token of triumph. It was that of a young man of from thirty-two to thirty-four years of age, with a graceful and well-knit frame, an aristocratic air and faultlessly beautiful features of a somewhat haughty expression. Although he had walked three leagues to reach the town, the ecclesiastical garb which he wore was not only elegant but of dainty freshness. His eyes turned to heaven, and singing in a sweet voice praise to the Lord, he passed through the streets leading to the church in the market-place with a slow and solemn gait, without vouchsafing a look, a word, or a gesture to anyone. The entire crowd, falling into step, marched behind him as he advanced, singing like him, the singers being the prettiest girls in Loudun, for we have forgotten to say that the crowd consisted almost entirely of women.

Meanwhile the object of all this commotion arrived at length at the porch of the church of Saint-Pierre. Ascending the steps, he knelt at the top and prayed in a low voice, then rising he touched the church doors with his laurel branch, and they opened wide as if by magic, revealing the choir decorated and illuminated as if for one of the four great feasts of the year, and with all its scholars, choir boys, singers, beadles, and vergers in their places. Glancing around, he for whom they were waiting came up the nave, passed through the choir, knelt for a second time at the foot of the altar, upon which he laid the branch of laurel, then putting on a robe as white as snow and passing the stole around his neck, he began the celebration of the mass before a congregation composed of all those who had followed him. At the end of the mass a *Te Deum* was sung.

He who had just rendered thanks to God for his own victory with all the solemn ceremonial usually reserved for the triumphs of kings was the priest Urbain Grandier. Two days before, he had been acquitted, in virtue of a decision pronounced by M. d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, of an accusation brought against him of which he had been declared guilty by a magistrate, and in punishment of

which he had been condemned to fast on bread and water every Friday for three months, and forbidden to exercise his priestly functions in the diocese of Poitiers for five years and in the town of Loudun for ever.

These are the circumstances under which the sentence had been passed and the judgment reversed.

Urbain Grandier was born at Rovère, a village near Sablé, a little town of Bas-Maine. Having studied the sciences with his father Pierre and his uncle Claude Grandier, who were learned astrologers and alchemists, he entered, at the age of twelve, the Jesuit college at Bordeaux, having already received the ordinary education of a young man. The professors soon found that besides his considerable attainments he had great natural gifts for languages and oratory; they therefore made of him a thorough classical scholar, and in order to develop his oratorical talent encouraged him to practise preaching. They soon grew very fond of a pupil who was likely to bring them so much credit, and as soon as he was old enough to take holy orders they gave him the cure of souls in the parish of Saint-Pierre in Loudun, which was in the gift of the college. When he had been some months installed there as priest-in-charge, he received a prebendal stall, thanks to the same patrons, in the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix.

It is easy to understand that the bestowal of these two positions on so young a man, who did not even belong to the province, made him seem in some sort a usurper of rights and privileges belonging to the people of the country, and drew upon him the envy of his brother-ecclesiastics. There were, in fact, many other reasons why Urbain should be an object of jealousy to these: first, as we have already said, he was very handsome, then the instruction which he had received from his father had opened the world of science to him and given him the key to a thousand things which were mysteries to the ignorant, but which he fathomed with the greatest ease. Furthermore, the comprehensive course of study which he had followed at the Jesuit college had raised him above a crowd of prejudices, which are sacred to the vulgar, but for which he

made no secret of his contempt; and lastly, the eloquence of his sermons had drawn to his church the greater part of the regular congregations of the other religious communities, especially of the mendicant orders, who had till then, in what concerned preaching, borne away the palm at Loudun. As we have said, all this was more than enough to excite, first jealousy, and then hatred. And both were excited in no ordinary degree.

We all know how easily the ill-natured gossip of a small town can rouse the angry contempt of the masses for everything which is beyond or above them. In a wider sphere Urbain would have shone by his many gifts, but cooped up as he was within the walls of a little town and deprived of air and space, all that might have conduced to his success in Paris led to his destruction at Loudun.

It was also unfortunate for Urbain that his character, far from winning pardon for his genius, augmented the hatred which the latter inspired. Urbain, who in his intercourse with his friends was cordial and agreeable, was sarcastic, cold, and haughty to his enemies. When he had once resolved on a course, he pursued it unflinchingly; he jealously exacted all the honour due to the rank at which he had arrived, defending it as though it were a conquest; he also insisted on enforcing all his legal rights, and he resented the opposition and angry words of casual opponents with a harshness which made them his lifelong enemies.

The first example which Urbain gave of this inflexibility was in 1620, when he gained a lawsuit against a priest named Meunier. He caused the sentence to be carried out with such rigour that he awoke an inextinguishable hatred in Meunier's mind, which ever after burst forth on the slightest provocation.

A second lawsuit, which he likewise gained, was one which he undertook against the chapter of Sainte-Croix with regard to a house, his claim to which the chapter disputed. Here again he displayed the same determination to exact his strict legal rights to the last iota, and unfortunately Mignon, the attorney of the unsuccessful chapter, was a revengeful,

vindictive, and ambitious man; too commonplace ever to arrive at a high position, and yet too much above his surroundings to be content with the secondary position which he occupied. This man, who was a canon of the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix and director of the Ursuline convent, will have an important part to play in the following narrative. Being as hypocritical as Urbain was straightforward, his ambition was to gain wherever his name was known a reputation for exalted piety; he therefore affected in his life the asceticism of an anchorite and the self-denial of a saint. As he had much experience in ecclesiastical lawsuits, he looked on the chapter's loss of this one, of which he had in some sort guaranteed the success, as a personal humiliation, so that when Urbain gave himself airs of triumph and exacted the last letter of his bond, as in the case of Meunier, he turned Mignon into an enemy who was not only more relentless but more dangerous than the former.

In the meantime, and in consequence of this lawsuit, a certain Barot, an uncle of Mignon and his partner as well, got up a dispute with Urbain, but as he was a man below mediocrity, Urbain required in order to crush him only to let fall from the height of his superiority a few of those disdainful words which brand as deeply as a red-hot iron. This man, though totally wanting in parts, was very rich, and having no children was always surrounded by a horde of relatives, every one of whom was absorbed in the attempt to make himself so agreeable that his name would appear in Barot's will. This being so, the mocking words which were rained down on Barot spattered not only himself but also all those who had sided with him in the quarrel, and thus added considerably to the tale of Urbain's enemies.

About this epoch a still graver event took place. Amongst the most assiduous frequenters of the confessional in his church was a young and pretty girl, Julie by name, the daughter of the king's attorney, Trinquant—Trinquant being, as well as Barot, an uncle of Mignon. Now it happened that this young girl fell into such a state of debility that she was obliged to keep

her room. One of her friends, named Marthe Pelletier, giving up society, of which she was very fond, undertook to nurse the patient, and carried her devotion so far as to shut herself up in the same room with her. When Julie Trinquant had recovered and was able again to take her place in the world, it came out that Marthe Pelletier, during her weeks of retirement, had given birth to a child, which had been baptized and then put out to nurse. Now, by one of those odd whims which so often take possession of the public mind, everyone in Loudun persisted in asserting that the real mother of the infant was not she who had acknowledged herself as such—that, in short, Marthe Pelletier had sold her good name to her friend Julie for a sum of money; and of course it followed as a matter about which there could be no possible doubt, that Urbain was the father.

Trinquant hearing of the reports about his daughter, took upon himself as king's attorney to have Marthe Pelletier arrested and imprisoned. Being questioned about the child, she insisted that she was its mother, and would take its maintenance upon herself. To have brought a child into the world under such circumstances was a sin, but not a crime; Trinquant was therefore obliged to set Marthe at liberty, and the abuse of justice of which he was guilty served only to spread the scandal farther and to strengthen the public in the belief it had taken up.

Hitherto, whether through the intervention of the heavenly powers, or by means of his own cleverness, Urbain Grandier had come out victor in every struggle in which he had engaged, but each victory had added to the number of his enemies, and these were now so numerous that any other than he would have been alarmed, and have tried either to conciliate them or to take precautions against their malice; but Urbain, wrapped in his pride, and perhaps conscious of his innocence, paid no attention to the counsels of his most faithful followers, but went on his way unheeding.

All the opponents whom till now Urbain had encountered had been entirely unconnected with each other, and had each

struggled for his own individual ends. Urbain's enemies, believing that the cause of his success was to be found in the want of co-operation among themselves, now determined to unite in order to crush him. In consequence, a conference was held at Barot's, at which, besides Barot himself, Meunier, Trinquant, and Mignon took part, and the latter had also brought with him one Menuau, a king's counsel and his own most intimate friend, who was, however, influenced by other motives than friendship in joining the conspiracy. The fact was, that Menuau was in love with a woman who had steadfastly refused to show him any favour, and he had got firmly fixed in his head that the reason for her else inexplicable indifference and disdain was that Urbain had been beforehand with him in finding an entrance to her heart. The object of the meeting was to agree as to the best means of driving the common enemy out of Loudun and its neighbourhood.

Urbain's life was so well ordered that it presented little which his enemies could use as a handle for their purpose. His only foible seemed to be a predilection for female society; while in return all the wives and daughters of the place, with the unerring instinct of their sex, seeing that the new priest was young, handsome, and eloquent, chose him, whenever it was possible, as their spiritual director. As this preference had already offended many husbands and fathers, the decision the conspirators arrived at was that on this side alone was Grandier vulnerable, and that their only chance of success was to attack him where he was weakest. Almost at once, therefore, the vague reports which had been floating about began to attain a certain definiteness: there were allusions made, though no name was mentioned, to a young girl of Loudun, who in spite of Grandier's frequent unfaithfulness yet remained his mistress-in-chief; then it began to be whispered that the young girl, having had conscientious scruples about her love for Urbain, he had allayed them by an act of sacrilege—that is to say, he had, as priest, in the middle of the night, performed the service of marriage between himself and his mistress. The more absurd the reports, the more credence did they gain,

and it was not long till everyone in Loudun believed them true, although no one was able to name the mysterious heroine of the tale who had had the courage to contract a marriage with a priest; and considering how small Loudun was, this was most extraordinary.

Resolute and full of courage as was Grandier, at length he could not conceal from himself that his path lay over quicksands: he felt that slander was secretly closing him round, and that as soon as he was well entangled in her shiny folds, she would reveal herself by raising her abhorred head, and that then a mortal combat between them would begin. But it was one of his convictions that to draw back was to acknowledge one's guilt; besides, as far as he was concerned, it was probably too late for him to retrace his steps. He therefore went on his way, as unyielding, as scornful, and as haughty as ever.

Among those who were supposed to be most active in spreading the slanders relative to Urbain was a man called Duthibaut, a person of importance in the province, who was supposed by the townspeople to hold very advanced views, and who was a "Sir Oracle" to whom the commonplace and vulgar turned for enlightenment. Some of this man's strictures on Grandier were reported to the latter, especially some calumnies to which Duthibaut had given vent at the Marquis de Bellay's; and one day, as Grandier, arrayed in priestly garments, was about to enter the church of Sainte-Croix to assist in the service he encountered Duthibaut at the entrance, and with his usual haughty disdain accused him of slander. Duthibaut, who had got into the habit of saying and doing whatever came into his head without fear of being called to account, partly because of his wealth and partly because of the influence he had gained over the narrow-minded, who are so numerous in a small provincial town, and who regarded him as being much above them, was so furious at this public reprimand, that he raised his cane and struck Urbain.

The opportunity which this affront afforded Grandier of being revenged on all his enemies was too precious to be neglected, but convinced, with too much reason, that he would

never obtain justice from the local authorities, although the respect due to the Church had been infringed in his person he decided to appeal to King Louis XIII, who deigned to receive him, and deciding that the insult offered to a priest robed in the sacred vestments should be expiated, sent the cause to the high court of Parliament, with instructions that the case against Duthibaut should be tried and decided there.

Hereupon Urbain's enemies saw they had no time to lose, and took advantage of his absence to make counter accusations against him. Two worthless beings, named Cherbonneau and Bugrau, agreed to become informers, and were brought before the ecclesiastical magistrate at Poitiers. They accused Grandier of having corrupted women and girls, of indulging in blasphemy and profanity, of neglecting to read his breviary daily, and of turning God's sanctuary into a place of debauchery and prostitution.

The information was taken down, and Louis Chauvet, the civil lieutenant, and the archpriest of Saint-Marcel and the Loudenois were appointed to investigate the matter, so that, while Urbain was instituting proceedings against Duthibaut in Paris, information was laid against himself in Loudun.

This matter thus set going was pushed forward with all the acrimony so common in religious prosecutions; Trinquant appeared as a witness, and drew many others after him, and whatever omissions were found in the depositions were interpolated according to the needs of the prosecution. The result was that the case when fully got up appeared to be so serious that it was sent to the Bishop of Poitiers for trial. Now the bishop was not only surrounded by the friends of those who were bringing the accusations against Grandier, but had himself a grudge against him. It had happened some time before that Urbain, the case being urgent, had dispensed with the usual notice of a marriage, and the bishop, knowing this, found in the papers laid before him, superficial as they were, sufficient evidence against Urbain to justify him in issuing a warrant for his apprehension, which was drawn up in the following words:—

"Henri-Louis, Chataignier de la Rochepezai, by divine mercy Bishop of Poitiers, in view of the charges and informations conveyed to us by the archpriest of Loudun against Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge of the Church of Saint-Pierre in the Market-Place at Loudun, in virtue of a commission appointed by us directed to the said archpriest, or in his absence to the Prior of Chassaignes, in view also of the opinion given by our attorney upon the said charges, have ordered and do hereby order that Urbain Grandier, the accused, be quietly taken to the prison in our palace in Poitiers, if it so be that he be taken and apprehended, and if not, that he be summoned to appear at his domicile within three days, by the first apparitor-priest, or tonsured clerk, and also by the first royal sergeant, upon this warrant, and we request the aid of the secular authorities, and to them, or to any one of them, we hereby give power and authority to carry out this decree notwithstanding any opposition or appeal, and the said Grandier having been heard, such a decision will be given by our attorney as the facts may seem to warrant.

"Given at Dissay the 22nd day of October 1629, and signed in the original as follows:—

"HENRI-LOUIS, Bishop of Poitiers."

Grandier was, as we have said, at Paris when these proceedings were taken against him, conducting before the Parliament his case against Duthibaut. The latter received a copy of the decision arrived at by the bishop, before Grandier knew of the charges that had been formulated against him, and having in the course of his defence drawn a terrible picture of the immorality of Grandier's life, he produced as a proof of the truth of his assertions the damning document which had been put into his hands. The court, not knowing what to think of the turn affairs had taken, decided that before considering the accusations brought by Grandier, he must appear before his bishop to clear himself of the charges brought against himself. Consequently he left Paris at once, and arrived at Loudun, where he only stayed long enough to learn what had happened

in his absence, and then went on to Poitiers in order to draw up his defence. He had, however, no sooner set foot in the place than he was arrested by a sheriff's officer named Chatry, and confined in the prison of the episcopal palace.

It was the middle of November, and the prison was at all times cold and damp, yet no attention was paid to Grandier's request that he should be transferred to some other place of confinement. Convinced by this that his enemies had more influence than he had supposed, he resolved to possess his soul in patience, and remained a prisoner for two months, during which even his warmest friends believed him lost, while Duthibaut openly laughed at the proceedings instituted against himself, which he now believed would never go any farther, and Barot had already selected one of his heirs, a certain Ismaël Boulieau, as successor to Urbain as priest and prebendary.

It was arranged that the costs of the lawsuit should be defrayed out of a fund raised by the prosecutors, the rich paying for the poor; for as all the witnesses lived at Loudun and the trial was to take place at Poitiers, considerable expense would be incurred by the necessity of bringing so many people such a distance; but the lust of vengeance proved stronger than the lust of gold; the subscription expected from each being estimated according to his fortune, each paid without a murmur, and at the end of two months the case was concluded.

In spite of the evident pains taken by the prosecution to strain the evidence against the defendant, the principal charge could not be sustained, which was that he had led astray many wives and daughters in Loudun. Not one woman came forward to complain of her ruin by Grandier; the name of no single victim of his alleged immorality was given. The conduct of the case was the most extraordinary ever seen; it was evident that the accusations were founded on hearsay and not on fact, and yet a decision and sentence against Grandier were pronounced on January 3rd, 1630. The sentence was as follows: For three months to fast each Friday on bread and water by way of penance; to be inhibited from the per-

formance of clerical functions in the diocese of Poitiers for five years, and in the town of Loudun for ever.

Both parties appealed from this decision: Grandier to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and his adversaries, on the advice of the attorney to the diocese, pleading a miscarriage of justice, to the Parliament of Paris; this last appeal being made in order to overwhelm Grandier and break his spirit. But Grandier's resolution enabled him to face this attack boldly: he engaged counsel to defend his case before the Parliament, while he himself conducted his appeal to the Archbishop of Bordeaux. But as there were many necessary witnesses, and it was almost impossible to bring them all such a great distance, the archiepiscopal court sent the appeal to the presidial court of Poitiers. The public prosecutor of Poitiers began a fresh investigation, which being conducted with impartiality was not encouraging to Grandier's accusers. There had been many conflicting statements made by the witnesses, and these were now repeated: other witnesses had declared quite openly that they had been bribed; others again stated that their depositions had been tampered with; and amongst these latter was a certain priest named Méchin, and also that Ismaël Boulieau whom Barot had been in such a hurry to select as candidate for the reversion of Grandier's preferments. Boulieau's deposition has been lost, but we can lay Méchin's before the reader, for the original has been preserved, just as it issued from his pen:—

"I, Gervais Méchin, curate-in-charge of the Church of Saint-Pierre in the Market Place at Loudun, certify by these presents, signed by my hand, to relieve my conscience as to a certain report which is being spread abroad, that I had said in support of an accusation brought by Gilles Robert, archpriest, against Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge of Saint Pierre, that I had found the said Grandier lying with women and girls in the church of Saint Pierre, the doors being closed.

"*Item*, that on several different occasions, at unsuitable hours both day and night, I had seen women and girls

disturb the said Grandier by going into his bedroom, and that some of the said women remained with him from one o'clock in the afternoon till three o'clock the next morning, their maids bringing them their suppers and going away again at once.

"*Item*, that I had seen the said Grandier in the church, the doors being open, but that as soon as some women entered he closed them. As I earnestly desire that such reports should cease, I declare by these presents that I have never seen the said Grandier with women or girls in the church, the doors being closed; that I have never found him there alone with women or girls; that when he spoke to either someone else was always present, and the doors were open; and as to their posture, I think I made it sufficiently clear when in the witness-box that Grandier was seated and the women scattered over the church; furthermore, I have never seen either women or girls enter Grandier's bedroom either by day or night, although it is true that I have heard people in the corridor coming and going late in the evening, who they were I cannot say, but a brother of the said Grandier sleeps close by; neither have I any knowledge that either women or girls had their suppers brought to the said room. I have also never said that he neglected the reading of his breviary, because that would be contrary to the truth, seeing that on several occasions he borrowed mine and read his hours in it. I also declare that I have never seen him close the doors of the church, and that whenever I have seen him speaking to women I have never noticed any impropriety; I have not ever seen him touch them in any way, they have only spoken together; and if anything is found in my deposition contrary to the above, it is without my knowledge, and was never read to me, for I would not have signed it, and I say and affirm all this in homage to the truth.

"Done the last day of October 1630,

"(*Signed*) G. MÉCHIN."

In the face of such proofs of innocence none of the accusations could be considered as established, and so, according to

the decision of the presidial court of Poitiers, dated the 25th of May 1634, the decision of the bishop's court was reversed, and Grandier was acquitted of the charges brought against him. However, he had still to appear before the Archbishop of Bordeaux, that his acquittal might be ratified. Grandier took advantage of a visit which the archbishop paid to his abbey of Saint-Jouin-les-Marmes, which was only three leagues from Loudun, to make this appearance; his adversaries, who were discouraged by the result of the proceedings at Poitiers, scarcely made any defence, and the archbishop, after an examination which brought clearly to light the innocence of the accused, acquitted and absolved him.

The rehabilitation of Grandier before his bishop had two important results: the first was that it clearly established his innocence, and the second that it brought into prominence his high attainments and eminent qualities. The archbishop seeing the persecutions to which he was subjected, felt a kindly interest in him, and advised him to exchange into some other diocese, leaving a town the principal inhabitants of which appeared to have vowed him a relentless hate. But such an abandonment of his rights was foreign to the character of Urbain, and he declared to his superior that, strong in His Grace's approbation and the testimony of his own conscience, he would remain in the place to which God had called him. Monseigneur de Sourdis did not feel it his duty to urge Urbain any further, but he had enough insight into his character to perceive that if Urbain should one day fall, it would be, like Satan, through pride; for he added another sentence to his decision, recommending him to fulfil the duties of his office with discretion and modesty, *according to the decrees of the Fathers and the canonical constitutions.* The triumphal entry of Urbain into Loudun with which we began our narrative shows the spirit in which he took this recommendation.

CHAPTER II

URBAIN GRANDIER was not satisfied with the arrogant demonstration by which he signalised his return, which even his friends had felt to be ill advised; instead of allowing the hate he had aroused to die away or at least to fall asleep by letting the past be past, he continued with more zeal than ever his proceedings against Duthibaut, and succeeded in obtaining a decree from the Parliament of La Tournelle, by which Duthibaut was summoned before it, and obliged to listen bareheaded to a reprimand, to offer apologies, and to pay damages and costs.

Having thus got the better of one enemy, Urbain turned on the others, and showed himself more indefatigable in the pursuit of justice than they had been in the pursuit of vengeance. The decision of the archbishop had given him a right to a sum of money for compensation, and interest thereon, as well as to the restitution of the revenues of his livings, and there being some demur made, he announced publicly that he intended to exact this reparation to the uttermost farthing, and set about collecting all the evidence which was necessary for the success of a new lawsuit for libel and forgery which he intended to begin. It was in vain that his friends assured him that the vindication of his innocence had been complete and brilliant, it was in vain that they tried to convince him of the danger of driving the vanquished to despair, Urbain replied that he was ready to endure all the persecutions which his enemies might succeed in inflicting on him, but as long as he felt that he had right upon his side he was incapable of drawing back.

Grandier's adversaries soon became conscious of the storm which was gathering above their heads, and feeling that the

struggle between themselves and this man would be one of life or death, Mignon, Barot, Meunier, Duthibaut, and Menuau met Trinquant at the village of Pindadane, in a house belonging to the latter, in order to consult about the dangers which threatened them. Mignon had, however, already begun to weave the threads of a new intrigue, which he explained in full to the others; they lent a favourable ear, and his plan was adopted. We shall see it unfold itself by degrees, for it is the basis of our narrative.

We have already said that Mignon was the director of the convent of Ursulines at Loudun. Now the Ursuline order was quite modern, for the historic controversies to which the slightest mention of the martyrdom of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins gave rise, had long hindered the foundation of an order in the saint's honour. However, in 1560 Madame Angèle de Bresse established such an order in Italy, with the same rules as the Augustinian order. This gained the approbation of Pope Gregory XIII in 1572. In 1614, Madeleine Lhuillier, with the approval of Pope Paul V, introduced this order into France, by founding a convent at Paris, whence it rapidly spread over the whole kingdom, so that in 1626, only six years before the time when the events just related took place, a sisterhood was founded in the little town of Loudun.

Although this community at first consisted entirely of ladies of good family, daughters of nobles, officers, judges, and the better class of citizens, and numbered amongst its founders Jeanne de Belfield, daughter of the late Marquis of Cose, and relative of M. de Laubardemont, Mademoiselle de Fazili, cousin of the cardinal-duke, two ladies of the house of Barbenis de Nogaret, Madame de Lamothe, daughter of the Marquis Lamothe-Baracé of Anjou, and Madame d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, of the same family as the Archbishop of Bordeaux, yet as these nuns had almost all entered the convent because of their want of fortune, the community found itself at the time of its establishment richer in blood than in money, and was obliged instead of building to purchase a private house.

The owner of this house was a certain Moussaut du Frêne, whose brother was a priest. This brother, therefore, naturally became the first director of these godly women. Less than a year after his appointment he died, and the directorship became vacant.

The Ursulines had bought the house in which they lived much below its normal value, for it was regarded as a haunted house by all the town. The landlord had rightly thought that there was no better way of getting rid of the ghosts than to confront them with a religious sisterhood, the members of which, passing their days in fasting and prayer, would be hardly likely to have their nights disturbed by bad spirits; and in truth, during the year which they had already passed in the house, no ghost had ever put in an appearance—a fact which had greatly increased the reputation of the nuns for sanctity.

When their director died, it so happened that the boarders took advantage of the occasion to indulge in some diversion at the expense of the older nuns, who were held in general detestation by the youth of the establishment on account of the rigour with which they enforced the rules of the order. Their plan was to raise once more those spirits which had been, as everyone supposed, permanently relegated to outer darkness. So noises began to be heard on the roof of the house, which resolved themselves into cries and groans; then growing bolder, the spirits entered the attics and garrets, announcing their presence by clanking of chains; at last they became so familiar that they invaded the dormitories, where they dragged the sheets off the sisters and abstracted their clothes.

Great was the terror in the convent, and great the talk in the town, so that the mother superior called her wisest nuns around her and asked them what, in their opinion, would be the best course to take in the delicate circumstances in which they found themselves. Without a dissentient voice, the conclusion arrived at was, that the late director should be immediately replaced by a man still holier than he, if such a man could be found, and whether because he possessed a reputation for sanctity, or for some other reason, their choice fell on Urbain Grandier.

When the offer of the post was brought to him, he answered that he was already responsible for two important charges, and that he therefore had not enough time to watch over the snow-white flock which they wished to entrust to him, as a good shepherd should, and he recommended the lady superior to seek out another more worthy and less occupied than himself.

This answer, as may be supposed, wounded the self-esteem of the sisters: they next turned their eyes towards Mignon, priest and canon of the collegiate church of Sainte-Croix, and he, although he felt deeply hurt that they had not thought first of him, accepted the position eagerly; but the recollection that Grandier had been preferred before himself kept awake in him one of those bitter hatreds which time, instead of soothing, intensifies. From the foregoing narrative the reader can see to what this hate led.

As soon as the new director was appointed, the mother superior confided to him the kind of foes which he would be expected to vanquish. Instead of comforting her by the assurance that no ghosts existing, it could not be ghosts who ran riot in the house, Mignon saw that by pretending to lay these phantoms he could acquire the reputation for holiness he so much desired. So he answered that the Holy Scriptures recognised the existence of ghosts by relating how the witch of Endor had made the shade of Samuel appear to Saul. He went on to say that the ritual of the Church possessed means of driving away all evil spirits, no matter how persistent they were, provided that he who undertook the task were pure in thought and deed, and that he hoped soon, by the help of God, to rid the convent of its nocturnal visitants, whereupon as a preparation for their expulsion he ordered a three days' fast, to be followed by a general confession.

It does not require any great cleverness to understand how easily Mignon arrived at the truth by questioning the young penitents as they came before him. The boarders who had played at being ghosts confessed their folly, saying that they had been helped by a young novice of sixteen years of age, named Marie Aubin. She acknowledged that this was true; it

was she who used to get up in the middle of the night and open the dormitory door, which her more timid room-mates locked most carefully from within every night, before going to bed—a fact which greatly increased their terror when, despite their precautions, the ghosts still got in. Under pretext of not exposing them to the anger of the superior, whose suspicions would be sure to be awakened if the apparitions were to disappear immediately after the general confession, Mignon directed them to renew their nightly frolics from time to time, but at longer and longer intervals. He then sought an interview with the superior, and assured her that he had found the minds of all those under her charge so chaste and pure that he felt sure through his earnest prayers he would soon clear the convent of the spirits which now pervaded it.

Everything happened as the director had foretold, and the reputation for sanctity of the holy man, who by watching and praying had delivered the worthy Ursulines from their ghostly assailants, increased enormously in the town of Loudun.

CHAPTER III

HARDLY had tranquillity been restored when Mignon, Duthibaut, Menuau, Meunier, and Barot, having lost their cause before the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and finding themselves threatened by Grandier with a prosecution for libel and forgery, met together to consult as to the best means of defending themselves before the unbending severity of this man, who would, they felt, destroy them if they did not destroy him.

The result of this consultation was that very shortly afterwards queer reports began to fly about; it was whispered that the ghosts whom the pious director had expelled had again invaded the convent, under an invisible and impalpable form, and that several of the nuns had given, by their words and acts, incontrovertible proofs of being possessed.

When these reports were mentioned to Mignon, he, instead of denying their truth, cast up his eyes to heaven and said that God was certainly a great and merciful God, but it was also certain that Satan was very clever, especially when he was backed by that false human science called magic. However, as to the reports, though they were not entirely without foundation, he would not go so far as to say that any of the sisters were really possessed by devils, that being a question which time alone could decide.

The effect of such an answer on minds already prepared to listen to the most impossible things, may easily be guessed. Mignon let the gossip go its rounds for several months without giving it any fresh food, but at length, when the time was ripe, he called on the priest of Saint-Jacques at Chinon, and told him that matters had now come to such a pass in the Ursuline convent that he felt it impossible to bear up alone under the re-

sponsibility of caring for the salvation of the afflicted nuns, and he begged him to accompany him to the convent. This priest, whose name was Pierre Barré, was exactly the man whom Mignon needed in such a crisis. He was of melancholy temperament, and dreamed dreams and saw visions; his one ambition was to gain a reputation for asceticism and holiness. Desiring to surround his visit with the solemnity befitting such an important event, he set out for Loudun at the head of all his parishioners, the whole procession going on foot, in order to arouse interest and curiosity; but this measure was quite needless, it took less than that to set the town agog.

While the faithful filled the churches offering up prayers for the success of the exorcisms, Mignon and Barré entered upon their task at the convent, where they remained shut up with the nuns for six hours. At the end of this time Barré appeared and announced to his parishioners that they might go back to Chinon without him, for he had made up his mind to remain for the present at Loudun, in order to aid the venerable director of the Ursuline convent in the holy work he had undertaken; he enjoined on them to pray morning and evening, with all possible fervour, that in spite of the serious dangers by which it was surrounded the good cause might finally triumph. This advice, unaccompanied as it was by any explanation, redoubled the curiosity of the people, and the belief gained ground that it was not merely one or two nuns who were possessed of devils, but the whole sisterhood. It was not very long before the name of the magician who had worked this wonder began to be mentioned quite openly: Satan, it was said, had drawn Urbain Grandier into his power, through his pride. Urbain had entered into a pact with the Evil Spirit by which he had sold him his soul in return for being made the most learned man on earth. Now, as Urbain's knowledge was much greater than that of the inhabitants of Loudun, this story gained general credence in the town, although here and there was to be found a man sufficiently enlightened to shrug his shoulders at these absurdities, and to laugh at the mummeries, of which as yet he saw only the ridiculous side.

For the next ten or twelve days Mignon and Barré spent the greater part of their time at the convent; sometimes remaining there for six hours at a stretch, sometimes the entire day. At length, on Monday the 11th of October 1632, they wrote to the priest of Venier, to Messire Guillaume Cerisay de la Guerinière, bailiff of the Loudenois, and to Messire Louis Chauvet, civil lieutenant, begging them to visit the Ursuline convent, in order to examine two nuns who were possessed by evil spirits, and to verify the strange and almost incredible manifestations of this possession. Being thus formally appealed to, the two magistrates could not avoid compliance with the request. It must be confessed that they were not free from curiosity, and felt far from sorry at being able to get to the bottom of the mystery of which for some time the whole town was talking. They repaired, therefore, to the convent, intending to make a thorough investigation as to the reality of the possession and as to the efficacy of the exorcisms employed. Should they judge that the nuns were really possessed, and that those who tried to deliver them were in earnest, they would authorise the continuation of the efforts at exorcism; but if they were not satisfied on these two points, they would soon put an end to the whole thing as a comedy. When they reached the door, Mignon, wearing alb and stole, came to meet them. He told them that the feelings of the nuns had for more than two weeks been harrowed by the apparition of spectres and other blood-curdling visions, that the mother superior and two nuns had evidently been possessed by evil spirits for over a week; that owing to the efforts of Barré and some Carmelite friars who were good enough to assist him against their common enemies, the devils had been temporarily driven out, but on the previous Sunday night, the 10th of October, the mother superior, Jeanne de Belfield, whose conventual name was Jeanne des Anges, and a lay sister called Jeanne Dumagnoux, had again been entered into by the same spirits. It had, however, been discovered by means of exorcisms that a new compact, of which the symbol and token was a bunch of roses, had been concluded, the symbol and

token of the first having been three black thorns. He added that during the time of the first possession the demons had refused to give their names, but by the power of his exorcisms this reluctance had been overcome, the spirit which had resumed possession of the mother superior having at length revealed that its name was Ashtaroth, one of the greatest enemies of God, while the devil which had entered into the lay sister was of a lower order, and was called Sabulon. Unfortunately, continued Mignon, just now the two afflicted nuns were resting, and he requested the bailiff and the civil lieutenant to put off their inspection till a little later. The two magistrates were just about to go away, when a nun appeared, saying that the devils were again doing their worst with the two into whom they had entered. Consequently, they accompanied Mignon and the priest from Venier to an upper room, in which were seven narrow beds, of which two only were occupied, one by the mother superior and the other by the lay sister. The superior, who was the more thoroughly possessed of the two, was surrounded by the Carmelite monks, the sisters belonging to the convent, Mathurin Rousseau, priest and canon of Sainte-Croix, and Mannouri, a surgeon from the town.

No sooner did the two magistrates join the others than the superior was seized with violent convulsions, writhing and uttering squeals in exact imitation of a sucking pig. The two magistrates looked on in profound astonishment, which was greatly increased when they saw the patient now bury herself in her bed, now spring right out of it, the whole performance being accompanied by such diabolical gestures and grimaces that, if they were not quite convinced that the possession was genuine, they were at least filled with admiration of the manner in which it was simulated. Mignon next informed the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, that although the superior had never learned Latin she would reply in that language to all the questions addressed to her, if such were their desire. The magistrates answered that as they were there in order to examine thoroughly into the facts of the case, they begged the exorcists to give them every possible proof that the

possession was real. Upon this, Mignon approached the mother superior, and having ordered everyone to be silent, placed two of his fingers in her mouth, and having gone through the form of exorcism prescribed by the ritual, he asked the following questions word for word as they are given :—

D. Propter quam causam ingressus es in corpus hujus virginis?	Why have you entered into the body of this young girl?
R. Causa animositatis.	Out of enmity.
D. Per quod pactum?	By what pact?
R. Per flores.	By flowers.
D. Quales?	What flowers?
R. Rosas.	Roses.
D. Quis misit?	By whom wert thou sent?

At this question the magistrates remarked that the superior hesitated to reply; twice she opened her mouth in vain, but the third time she said in a weak voice—

R. Urbanus.	Urbain.
D. Dic cognomen?	What is his surname?

Here there was again the same hesitation, but as if impelled by the will of the exorcist she answered—

R. Grandier.	Grandier.
D. Dic qualitatem?	What is his profession?
R. Sacerdos.	A priest.
D. Cujus ecclesiæ?	Of what church?
R. Sancti Petri.	Saint-Pierre.
D. Quae persona attulit flores?	Who brought the flowers?
R. Diabolica.	Someone sent by the devil.

As the patient pronounced the last word she recovered her senses, and having repeated a prayer, attempted to swallow a morsel of bread which was offered her; she was, however, obliged

to spit it out, saying it was so dry she could not get it down. Something more liquid was then brought, but even of that she could swallow very little, as she fell into convulsions every few minutes.

Upon this the two officials, seeing there was nothing more to be got out of the superior, withdrew to one of the window recesses and began to converse in a low tone; whereupon Mignon, who feared that they had not been sufficiently impressed, followed them, and drew their attention to the fact that there was much in what they had just seen to recall the case of Gaufredi, who had been put to death a few years before in consequence of a decree of the Parliament of Aix, in Provence. This ill-judged remark of Mignon showed so clearly what his aim was that the magistrates made no reply. The civil lieutenant remarked that he had been surprised that Mignon had not made any attempt to find out the *cause* of the *enmity* of which the superior had spoken, and which it was so important to find out; but Mignon excused himself by saying that he had no right to put questions merely to gratify curiosity. The civil lieutenant was about to insist on the matter being investigated, when the lay sister in her turn went into a fit, thus extricating Mignon from his embarrassment. The magistrates approached the lay sister's bed at once, and directed Mignon to put the same questions to her as to the superior: he did so, but all in vain; all she would reply was, "To the other! To the other!"

Mignon explained this refusal to answer by saying that the evil spirit which was in her was of an inferior order, and referred all questioners to Ashtaroth, who was his superior. As this was the only explanation, good or bad, offered them by Mignon, the magistrates went away, and drew up a report of all they had seen and heard without comment, merely appending their signatures.

But in the town very few people showed the same discretion and reticence as the magistrates. The bigoted believed, the hypocrites pretended to believe; and the worldly-minded, who were numerous, discussed the doctrine of possession in all its phases, and made no secret of their own entire incredulity.

They wondered, and not without reason it must be confessed, what had induced the devils to go out of the nuns' bodies for two days only, and then come back and resume possession, to the confusion of the exorcists; further, they wanted to know why the mother superior's devil spoke Latin, while the lay sister's was ignorant of that tongue; for a mere difference of rank in the hierarchy of hell did not seem a sufficient explanation of such a difference in education; Mignon's refusal to go on with his interrogations as to the cause of the enmity made them, they said, suspect that, knowing he had reached the end of Ashtaroth's classical knowledge, he felt it useless to try to continue the dialogue in the Ciceronian idiom. Moreover, it was well known that only a few days before all Urbain's worst enemies had met in conclave in the village of Puidardane; and besides, how stupidly Mignon had shown his hand by mentioning Gaufredi, the priest who had been executed at Aix: lastly, why had not a desire for impartiality been shown by calling in other than Carmelite monks to be present at the exorcism, that order having a private quarrel with Grandier? It must be admitted that this way of looking at the case was not wanting in shrewdness.

On the following day, October 12th, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, having heard that exorcisms had been again tried without their having been informed beforehand, requested a certain Canon Rousseau to accompany them, and set out with him and their clerk for the convent. On arriving, they asked for Mignon, and on his appearance they told him that this matter of exorcism was of such importance that no further steps were to be taken in it without the authorities being present, and that in future they were to be given timely notice of every attempt to get rid of the evil spirits. They added that this was all the more necessary as Mignon's position as director of the sisterhood and his well-known hate for Grandier would draw suspicions on him unworthy of his cloth, suspicions which he ought to be the first to wish to see dissipated, and that quickly; and that, therefore, the work which he had so piously begun would be completed by exorcists appointed by the court.

Mignon replied that, though he had not the slightest objection to the magistrates being present at all the exorcisms, yet he could not promise that the spirits would reply to anyone except himself and Barré. Just at that moment Barré came on the scene, paler and more gloomy than ever, and speaking with the air of a man whose word no one could help believing, he announced that before their arrival some most extraordinary things had taken place. The magistrates asked what things, and Barré replied that he had learned from the mother superior that she was possessed, not by one, but by seven devils, of whom Ashtaroth was the chief; that Grandier had entrusted his pact with the devil, under the symbol of a bunch of roses, to a certain Jean Pivart, to give to a girl who had introduced it into the convent garden by throwing it over the wall; that this took place in the night between Saturday and Sunday "*horâ secundâ nocturnâ*" (two hours after midnight); that those were the very words the superior had used, but that while she readily named Pivart, she absolutely refused to give the name of the girl; that on asking what Pivart was, she had replied, "*Pauper magus*" (a poor magician); that he then had pressed her as to the word *magus*, and that she had replied "*Magicianus et civis*" (magician and citizen); and that just as she said those words the magistrates had arrived, and he had asked no more questions.

The two officials listened to this information with the seriousness befitting men entrusted with high judicial functions, and announced to the two priests that they proposed to visit the possessed women and witness for themselves the miracles that were taking place. The clerics offered no opposition, but said they feared that the devils were fatigued and would refuse to reply; and, in fact, when the officials reached the sickroom the two patients appeared to have regained some degree of calm. Mignon took advantage of this quiet moment to say mass, to which the two magistrates listened devoutly and tranquilly, and while the sacrifice was being offered the demons did not dare to move. It was expected that they would offer some opposition at the elevation of the Host, but everything passed off

without disturbance, only the lay sister's hands and feet twitched a great deal; and this was the only fact which the magistrates thought worthy of mention in their report for that morning. Barré assured them, however, that if they would return about three o'clock the devils would probably have recovered sufficiently from their fatigue to give a second performance.

As the two gentlemen had determined to see the affair to the end, they returned to the convent at the hour named, accompanied by Messire Irénée de Sainte-Marthe, sieur Deshumeaux; and found the room in which the possessed were lying full of curious spectators; for the exorcists had been true prophets—the devils were at work again.

The superior, as always, was the more tormented of the two, as was only to be expected, she having seven devils in her all at once; she was terribly convulsed, and was writhing and foaming at the mouth as if she were mad. No one could long continue in such a condition without serious injury to health; Barré therefore asked the devil-in-chief how soon he would come out. "*Cras manè*" (To-morrow morning), he replied. The exorcist then tried to hurry him, asking him why he would not come out at once; whereupon the superior murmured the word "*Pactum*" (A pact); and then "*Sacerdos*" (A priest), and finally "*Finis*," or "*Finit*," for even those nearest could not catch the word distinctly, as the devil, afraid doubtless of perpetrating a barbarism, spoke through the nun's closely clenched teeth. This being all decidedly unsatisfying, the magistrates insisted that the examination should continue, but the devils had again exhausted themselves, and refused to utter another word. The priest even tried touching the superior's head with the pyx, while prayers and litanies were recited, but it was all in vain, except that some of the spectators thought that the contortions of the patient became more violent when the intercessions of certain saints were invoked, as for instance Saints Augustine, Jerome, Antony, and Mary Magdalene. Barré next directed the mother superior to dedicate her heart and soul to God, which she did without difficulty; but when he commanded her to dedicate her body also, the chief devil indicated by fresh

convulsions that he was not going to allow himself to be deprived of a domicile without resistance, and made those who had heard him say that he would leave the next morning feel that he had only said so under compulsion; and their curiosity as to the result became heightened. At length, however, despite the obstinate resistance of the demon, the superior succeeded in dedicating her body also to God, and thus victorious her features resumed their usual expression, and smiling as if nothing had happened, she turned to Barré and said that there was no vestige of Satan left in her. The civil lieutenant then asked her if she remembered the questions she had been asked and the answers she had given, but she replied that she remembered nothing; but afterwards, having taken some refreshment, she said to those around her that she recollected perfectly how the first possession, over which Mignon had triumphed, had taken place: one evening about ten o'clock, while several nuns were still in her room, although she was already in bed, it seemed to her that someone took her hand and laid something in it, closing her fingers; at that instant she felt a sharp pain as if she had been pricked by three pins, and hearing her scream, the nuns came to her bedside to ask what ailed her. She held out her hand, and they found three black thorns sticking in it, each having made a tiny wound. Just as she had told this tale, the lay sister, as if to prevent all commentary, was seized with convulsions, and Barré recommenced his prayers and exorcisms, but was soon interrupted by shrieks; for one of the persons present had seen a black cat come down the chimney and disappear. Instantly everyone concluded it must be the devil, and began to seek it out. It was not without great difficulty that it was caught; for, terrified at the sight of so many people and at the noise, the poor animal had sought refuge under a canopy; but at last it was secured and carried to the superior's bedside, where Barré began his exorcisms once more, covering the cat with signs of the cross, and adjuring the devil to take his true shape. Suddenly the *tourière*, (the woman who received the tradespeople,) came forward, declaring the supposed devil to be only

her cat, and she immediately took possession of it, lest some harm should happen to it.

The gathering had been just about to separate, but Barré fearing that the incident of the cat might throw a ridiculous light upon the evil spirits, resolved to awake once more a salutary terror by announcing that he was going to burn the flowers through which the second spell had been made to work. Producing a bunch of white roses, already faded, he ordered a lighted brazier to be brought. He then threw the flowers on the glowing charcoal, and to the general astonishment they were consumed without any visible effect: the heavens still smiled, no peal of thunder was heard, and no unpleasant odour diffused itself through the room. Barré feeling that the baldness of this act of destruction had had a bad effect, predicted that the morrow would bring forth wondrous things; that the chief devil would speak more distinctly than hitherto; that he would leave the body of the superior, giving such clear signs of his passage that no one would dare to doubt any longer that it was a case of genuine possession. Thereupon the criminal lieutenant, Réné Hervé, who had been present during the exorcism, said they must seize upon the moment of his exit to ask about Pivart, who was unknown at Loudun, although everyone who lived there knew everybody else. Barré replied in Latin, "*Et hoc dicet et puellam nominabit*" (He will not only tell about him, but he will also name the young girl). The young girl whom the devil was to name was, it may be recollected, she who had introduced the flowers into the convent, and whose name the demon until now had absolutely refused to give. On the strength of these promises everyone went home to await the morrow with impatience.

CHAPTER IV

THAT evening Grandier asked the bailiff for an audience. At first he had made fun of the exorcisms, for the story had been so badly concocted, and the accusations were so glaringly improbable, that he had not felt the least anxiety. But as the case went on it assumed such an important aspect, and the hatred displayed by his enemies was so intense, that the fate of the priest Gaufredi, referred to by Mignon, occurred to Urbain's mind, and in order to be beforehand with his enemies he determined to lodge a complaint against them. This complaint was founded on the fact that Mignon had performed the rite of exorcism in the presence of the civil lieutenant, the bailiff, and many other persons, and had caused the nuns who were said to be possessed, in the hearing of all these people, to name him, Urbain, as the author of their possession. This being a falsehood and an attack upon his honour, he begged the bailiff, in whose hands the conduct of the affair had been specially placed, to order the nuns to be sequestered, apart from the rest of the sisterhood and from each other, and then to have each separately examined. Should there appear to be any evidence of possession, he hoped that the bailiff would be pleased to appoint clerics of well-known rank and upright character to perform whatever exorcisms were needful; such men having no bias against him would be more impartial than Mignon and his adherents. He also called upon the bailiff to have an exact report drawn up of everything that took place at the exorcisms, in order that, if necessary, he as petitioner might be able to lay it before anyone to whose judgment he might appeal. The bailiff gave Grandier a statement of the conclusions at which he had

arrived, and told him that the exorcisms had been performed that day by Barré, armed with the authority of the Bishop of Poitiers himself. Being, as we have seen, a man of common sense and entirely unprejudiced in the matter, the bailiff advised Grandier to lay his complaint before his bishop; but unfortunately he was under the authority of the Bishop of Poitiers, who was so prejudiced against him that he had done everything in his power to induce the Archbishop of Bordeaux to refuse to ratify the decision in favour of Grandier, pronounced by the presidial court. Urbain could not hide from the magistrate that he had nothing to hope for from this quarter, and it was decided that he should wait and see what the morrow would bring forth, before taking any further step.

The impatiently expected day dawned at last, and at eight o'clock in the morning the bailiff, the king's attorney, the civil lieutenant, the criminal lieutenant, and the provost's lieutenant, with their respective clerks, were already at the convent. They found the outer gate open, but the inner door shut. In a few moments Mignon came out to them and brought them into a waiting-room. There he told them that the nuns were preparing for communion, and that he would be very much obliged to them if they would withdraw and wait in a house across the street, just opposite the convent, and that he would send them word when they could come back. The magistrates, having first informed Mignon of Urbain's petition, retired as requested.

An hour passed, and as Mignon did not summon them, in spite of his promise, they all went together to the convent chapel, where they were told the exorcisms were already over. The nuns had quitted the choir, and Mignon and Barré came to the grating and told them that they had just completed the rite, and that, thanks to their conjurations, the two afflicted ones were now quite free from evil spirits. They went on to say that they had been working together at the exorcism from seven o'clock in the morning, and that great wonders, of which they had drawn up an account, had come to pass; but they had considered it would not be proper to allow anyone

else to be present during the ceremony besides the exorcists and the possessed. The bailiff pointed out that their manner of proceeding was not only illegal, but that it laid them under suspicion of fraud and collusion, in the eyes of the impartial. Moreover, as the superior had accused Grandier publicly, she was bound to renew and prove her accusation also publicly, and not in secret; furthermore, it was a great piece of insolence on the part of the exorcists to invite people of their standing and character to come to the convent, and having kept them waiting an hour, to tell them that they considered them unworthy to be admitted to the ceremony which they had been requested to attend; and he wound up by saying that he would draw up a report, as he had already done on each of the preceding days, setting forth the extraordinary discrepancy between their promises and their performance. Mignon replied that he and Barré had had only one thing in view, viz. the expulsion of the demons, and that in that they had succeeded, and that their success would be of great benefit to the holy Catholic faith, for they had got the demons so thoroughly into their power that they had been able to command them to produce within a week miraculous proofs of the spells cast on the nuns by Urbain Grandier and their wonderful deliverance therefrom, so that in future no one would be able to doubt as to the reality of the possession. Thereupon the magistrates drew up a report of all that had happened, and of what Barré and Mignon had said. This was signed by all the officials present, except the criminal lieutenant, who declared that, having perfect confidence in the statements of the exorcists, he was anxious to do nothing to increase the doubting spirit which was unhappily so prevalent among the worldly.

The same day the bailiff secretly warned Urbain of the refusal of the criminal lieutenant to join with the others in signing the report, and almost at the same moment he learned that the cause of his adversaries was strengthened by the adhesion of a certain Messire René Memin, seigneur de Silly, and prefect of the town. This gentleman was held in great

esteem not only on account of his wealth and the many offices which he filled, but above all on account of his powerful friends, among whom was the cardinal-duke himself, to whom he had formerly been of use when the cardinal was only a prior. The character of the conspiracy had now become so alarming that Grandier felt it was time to oppose it with all his strength. Recalling his conversation with the bailiff the preceding day, during which he had advised him to lay his complaint before the Bishop of Poitiers, he set out, accompanied by a priest of Loudun, named Jean Buron, for the prelate's country house at Dissay. The bishop, anticipating his visit, had already given his orders, and Grandier was met by Dupuis, the intendant of the palace, who in reply to Grandier's request to see the bishop told him that his lordship was ill. Urbain next addressed himself to the bishop's chaplain, and begged him to inform the prelate that his object in coming was to lay before him the official reports which the magistrates had drawn up of the events which had taken place at the Ursuline convent, and to lodge a complaint as to the slanders and accusations of which he was the victim. Grandier spoke so urgently that the chaplain could not refuse to carry his message; he returned, however, in a few moments, and told Grandier, in the presence of Dupuis, Buron, and a certain sieur Labrasse, that the bishop advised him to take his case to the royal judges, and that he earnestly hoped he would obtain justice from them. Grandier perceived that the bishop had been warned against him, and felt that he was becoming more and more entangled in the net of conspiracy around him; but he was not a man to flinch before any danger. He therefore returned immediately to Loudun, and went once more to the bailiff, to whom he related all that had happened at Dissay; he then, a second time, made a formal complaint as to the slanders circulated with regard to him, and begged the magistrate to have recourse to the king's courts in the business. He also said that he desired to be placed under the protection of the king and his justice, as the accusations made against him were aimed at his honour and his life. The bailiff hastened to make out a

certificate of Urbain's protest, which forbade at the same time the repetition of the slanders or the infliction on Urbain of any injury.

Thanks to this document, a change of parts took place: Mignon the accuser became the accused. Feeling that he had powerful support behind him, he had the audacity to appear before the bailiff the same day. He said that he did not acknowledge his jurisdiction, as in what concerned Grandier and himself, they being both priests, they could only be judged by their bishop; he nevertheless protested against the complaint lodged by Grandier which characterised him as a slanderer, and declared that he was ready to give himself up as a prisoner, in order to show everyone that he did not fear the result of any inquiry. Furthermore, he had taken an oath on the sacred elements the day before, in the presence of his parishioners who had come to mass, that in all he had hitherto done he had been moved, not by hatred of Grandier, but by love of the truth, and by his desire for the triumph of the Catholic faith; and he insisted that the bailiff should give him a certificate of his declaration, and served notice of the same on Grandier that very day.

CHAPTER V

SINCE October 13th, the day on which the demons had been expelled, life at the convent seemed to have returned to its usual quiet; but Grandier did not let himself be lulled asleep by the calm: he knew those with whom he was contending too well to imagine for an instant that he would hear no more of them; and when the bailiff expressed pleasure at this interval of repose, Grandier said that it would not last long, as the nuns were only conning new parts, in order to carry on the drama in a more effective manner than ever. And in fact, on November 22nd, René Mannouri, surgeon to the convent, was sent to one of his colleagues, named Gaspard Joubert, to beg him to come, bringing some of the physicians of the town with him, to visit the two sisters, who were again tormented by evil spirits. Mannouri, however, had gone to the wrong man, for Joubert had a frank and loyal character, and hated everything that was underhand. Being determined to take no part in the business, except in a public and judicial manner, he applied at once to the bailiff to know if it was by his orders that he was called in. The bailiff said it was not, and summoned Mannouri before him to ask him by whose authority he had sent for Joubert. Mannouri declared that the *tourière* had run in a fright to his house, saying that the nuns had never been worse possessed than now, and that the director Mignon begged him to come at once to the convent, bringing with him all the doctors he could find.

The bailiff, seeing that fresh plots against Grandier were being formed, sent for him and warned him that Barré had come over from Chinon the day before, and had resumed his exorcisms at the convent, adding that it was currently reported

in the town that the mother superior and Sister Claire were again tormented by devils. The news neither astonished nor discouraged Grandier, who replied, with his usual smile of disdain, that it was evident his enemies were hatching new plots against him, and that as he had instituted proceedings against them for the former ones, he would take the same course with regard to these. At the same time, knowing how impartial the bailiff was, he begged him to accompany the doctors and officials to the convent, and to be present at the exorcisms, and should any sign of real possession manifest itself, to sequester the afflicted nuns at once, and cause them to be examined by other persons than Mignon and Barré, whom he had such good cause to distrust. The bailiff wrote to the king's attorney, who, notwithstanding his bias against Grandier, was forced to see that the conclusions arrived at were correct, and having certified this in writing, he at once sent his clerk to the convent to inquire if the superior were still possessed. In case of an affirmative reply being given, the clerk had instructions to warn Mignon and Barré that they were not to undertake exorcisms unless in presence of the bailiff and of such officials and doctors as he might choose to bring with him, and that they would disobey at their peril; he was also to tell them that Grandier's demands to have the nuns sequestered and other exorcists called in were granted.

Mignon and Barré listened while the clerk read his instructions, and then said they refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the bailiff in this case; that they had been summoned by the mother superior and Sister Claire when their strange illness returned, an illness which they were convinced was nothing else than possession by evil spirits; that they had hitherto carried out their exorcisms under the authority of a commission given them by the Bishop of Poitiers; and as the time for which they had permission had not yet expired, they would continue to exorcise as often as might be necessary. They had, however, given notice to the worthy prelate of what was going on, in order that he might either come himself or send other exorcists as best suited him, so that a valid opinion as to

the reality of the possession might be procured, for up to the present the worldly and unbelieving had taken upon themselves to declare in an off-hand manner that the whole affair was a mixture of fraud and delusion, in contempt of the glory of God and the Catholic religion. As to the rest of the message, they would not in any way prevent the bailiff and the other officials, with as many medical men as they chose to bring, from seeing the nuns, at least until they heard from the bishop, from whom they expected a letter next day. But it was for the nuns themselves to say whether it was convenient for them to receive visitors; as far as concerned themselves, they desired to renew their protest, and declared they could not accept the bailiff as their judge, and did not think that it could be legal for them to refuse to obey a command from their ecclesiastical superiors, whether with relation to exorcism or any other thing of which the ecclesiastical courts properly took cognisance. The clerk brought this answer to the bailiff, and he, thinking it was better to wait for the arrival either of the bishop or of fresh orders from him, put off his visit to the convent until the next day. But the next day came without anything being heard of the prelate himself or of a messenger from him.

Early in the morning the bailiff went to the convent, but was not admitted; he then waited patiently until noon, and seeing that no news had arrived from Dissay, and that the convent gates were still closed against him, he granted a second petition of Grandier's, to the effect that Barré and Mignon should be prohibited from questioning the superior and the other nuns in a manner tending to blacken the character of the petitioner or any other person. Notice of this prohibition was served the same day on Barré and on one nun chosen to represent the community. Barré did not pay the slightest attention to this notice, but kept on asserting that the bailiff had no right to prevent his obeying the commands of his bishop, and declaring that henceforward he would perform all exorcisms solely under ecclesiastical sanction, without any reference to lay persons, whose unbelief and impatience impaired the solemnity with which such rites should be conducted.

The best part of the day having gone over without any sign of either bishop or messenger, Grandier presented a new petition to the bailiff. The bailiff at once summoned all the officers of the bailiwick and the attorneys of the king, in order to lay it before them; but the king's attorneys refused to consider the matter, declaring upon their honour that although they did not accuse Grandier of being the cause, yet they believed that the nuns were veritably possessed, being convinced by the testimony of the devout ecclesiastics in whose presence the evil spirits had come out. This was only the ostensible reason for their refusal, the real one being that the advocate was a relation of Mignon's, and the attorney a son-in-law of Trinquant's, to whose office he had succeeded. Thus Grandier, against whom were all the ecclesiastical judges, began to feel as if he were condemned beforehand by the judges of the royal courts, for he knew how very short was the interval between the recognition of the possession as a fact and the recognition of himself as its author.

Nevertheless, in spite of the formal declarations of the king's advocate and attorney, the bailiff ordered the superior and the lay sister to be removed to houses in the town, each to be accompanied by a nun as companion. During their absence from the convent they were to be looked after by exorcists, by women of high character and position, as well as by physicians and attendants, all of whom he himself would appoint, all others being forbidden access to the nuns without his permission.

The clerk was again sent to the convent with a copy of this decision, but the superior having listened to the reading of the document, answered that in her own name and that of the sisterhood she refused to recognise the jurisdiction of the bailiff; that she had already received directions from the Bishop of Poitiers, dated 18th November, explaining the measures which were to be taken in the matter, and she would gladly send a copy of these directions to the bailiff, to prevent his pleading ignorance of them; furthermore, she demurred to the order for her removal, having vowed to live always secluded in a convent, and that no one could dispense her from this vow but the bishop. This protest having been made in the presence

of Madame de Charnisay, aunt of two of the nuns, and Surgeon Mannouri, who was related to another, they both united in drawing up a protest against violence, in case the bailiff should insist on having his orders carried out, declaring that, should he make the attempt they would resist him, as if he were a mere private individual. This document being duly signed and witnessed was immediately sent to the bailiff by the hand of his own clerk, whereupon the bailiff ordered that preparations should be made with regard to the sequestration, and announced that the next day, the 24th November, he would repair to the convent and be present at the exorcisms.

The next day accordingly, at the appointed hour, the bailiff summoned Daniel Roger, Vincent de Faux, Gaspard Joubert, and Matthieu Fanson, all four physicians, to his presence, and acquainting them with his reasons for having called them, asked them to accompany him to the convent to examine, with the most scrupulous impartiality, two nuns whom he would point out, in order to discover if their illness were feigned, or arose from natural or supernatural causes. Having thus instructed them as to his wishes, they all set out for the convent.

They were shown into the chapel and placed close to the altar, being separated by a grating from the choir, in which the nuns who sang usually sat. In a few moments the superior was carried in on a small bed, which was laid down before the grating. Barré then said mass, during which the superior went into violent convulsions. She threw her arms about, her fingers were clenched, her cheeks enormously inflated, and her eyes turned up so that only the whites could be seen.

The mass finished, Barré approached her to administer the holy communion and to commence the exorcism. Holding the holy wafer in his hand, he said—

"*Adora Deum tuum, creatorem tuum*" (Adore God, thy Creator).

The superior hesitated, as if she found great difficulty in making this act of love, but at length she said—

"*Adoro te*" (I adore Thee).

"*Quem adoras?*" (Whom dost thou adore?)

"*Jesus Christus*" (Jesus Christ), answered the nun, quite unconscious that the verb *adoro* governs the accusative.

This mistake, which no sixth-form boy would make, gave rise to bursts of laughter in the church; and Daniel Douin, the provost's assessor, was constrained to say aloud—

"There's a devil for you, who does not know much about transitive verbs."

Barré perceiving the bad impression that the superior's nominative had made, hastened to ask her—

"*Quis est iste quem adoras?*" (Who is it whom thou dost adore?)

His hope was that she would again reply "*Jesus Christus*," but he was disappointed.

"*Jesu Christe*," was her answer.

Renewed shouts of laughter greeted this infraction of one of the most elementary rules of syntax, and several of those present exclaimed—

"Oh, your reverence, what very poor Latin!"

Barré pretended not to hear, and next asked what was the name of the demon who had taken possession of her. The poor superior, who was greatly confused by the unexpected effect of her last two answers, could not speak for a long time; but at length with great trouble she brought out the name *Asmodée*, without daring to latinise it. The exorcist then inquired how many devils the superior had in her body, and to this question she replied quite fluently—

"*Sex*" (Six).

The bailiff upon this requested Barré to ask the chief devil how many evil spirits he had with him. But the need for this answer had been foreseen, and the nun unhesitatingly returned—

"*Quinque*" (Five).

This answer raised *Asmodée* somewhat in the opinion of those present, but when the bailiff adjured the superior to repeat in Greek what she had just said in Latin she made no reply, and on the adjuration being renewed she immediately recovered her senses.

The examination of the superior being thus cut short, a little nun who appeared for the first time in public was brought forward. She began by twice pronouncing the name of Grandier with a loud laugh; then turning to the bystanders, called out—

"For all your number, you can do nothing worth while."

As it was easy to see that nothing of importance was to be expected from this new patient, she was soon suppressed, and her place taken by the lay sister Claire, who had already made her *début* in the mother superior's room.

Hardly had she entered the choir than she uttered a groan, but as soon as they placed her on the little bed on which the other nuns had lain, she gave way to uncontrollable laughter, and cried out between the paroxysms—

"Grandier, Grandier, you must buy some at the market."

Barré at once declared that these wild and whirling words were a proof of possession, and approached to exorcise the demon; but Sister Claire resisted, and pretending to spit in the face of the exorcist, put out her tongue at him, making indecent gestures, using a word in harmony with her actions. This word being in the vernacular was understood by everyone, and required no interpretation.

The exorcist then conjured her to give the name of the demon who was in her, and she replied—

"*Grandier.*"

But Barré by repeating his question gave her to understand that she had made a mistake, whereupon she corrected herself and said—

"*Elimi.*"

Nothing in the world could induce her to reveal the number of evil spirits by whom *Elimi* was accompanied, so that Barré, seeing that it was useless to press her on this point, passed on to the next question.

"*Quo pacto ingressus est dæmon?*" (By what pact did the demon get in?)

"*Duplex*" (Double), returned Sister Claire.

This horror of the ablative, when the ablative was absolutely

necessary, aroused once more the hilarity of the audience, and proved that Sister Claire's devil was just as poor a Latin scholar as the superior's, and Barré, fearing some new linguistic eccentricity on the part of the evil spirit, adjourned the meeting to another day.

The paucity of learning shown in the answers of the nuns being sufficient to convince any fair-minded person that the whole affair was a ridiculous comedy, the bailiff felt encouraged to persevere until he had unravelled the whole plot. Consequently, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he returned to the convent, accompanied by his clerk, by several magistrates, and by a considerable number of the best known people of Loudun, and asked to see the superior. Being admitted, he announced to Barré that he had come to insist on the superior being separated from Sister Claire, so that each could be exorcised apart. Barré dared not refuse before such a great number of witnesses, therefore the superior was isolated and the exorcisms begun all over again. Instantly the convulsions returned, just as in the morning, only that now she twisted her feet into the form of hooks, which was a new accomplishment.

Having adjured her several times, the exorcist succeeded in making her repeat some prayers, and then sounded her as to the name and number of the demons in possession, whereupon she said three times that there was one called *Achaos*. The bailiff then directed Barré to ask if she were possessed *ex pacto magi, aut ex pura voluntate Dei* (by a pact with a sorcerer or by the pure will of God), to which the superior answered—

"*Non est voluntas Dei*" (Not by the will of God).

Upon this, Barré dreading more questions from the bystanders, hastily resumed his own catechism by asking who was the sorcerer.

"*Urbanus*," answered the superior.

"*Est-ne Urbanus papa?*" (Is it Pope Urban?), asked the exorcist.

"*Grandier*," replied the superior.

"*Quare ingressus es in corpus hujus puellæ?*" (Why did you enter the body of this maiden?), said Barré.

"*Propter præsentiam tuum*" (Because of your presence), answered the superior.

At this point the bailiff, seeing no reason why the dialogue between Barré and the superior should ever come to an end, interposed and demanded that questions suggested by him and the other officials present should be put to the superior, promising that if she answered three or four such questions correctly, he, and those with him, would believe in the reality of the possession, and would certify to that effect. Barré accepted the challenge, but unluckily just at that moment the superior regained consciousness, and as it was already late, everyone retired.

CHAPTER VI

THE next day, November 25th, the bailiff and the majority of the officers of the two jurisdictions came to the convent once more, and were all conducted to the choir. In a few moments the curtains behind the grating were drawn back, and the superior, lying on her bed, came to view. Barré began, as usual, by the celebration of mass, during which the superior was seized with convulsions, and exclaimed two or three times, "Grandier! Grandier! false priest!" When the mass was over, the celebrant went behind the grating, carrying the pyx; then, placing it on his head and holding it there, he protested that in all he was doing he was actuated by the purest motives and the highest integrity; that he had no desire to harm anyone on earth; and he adjured God to strike him dead if he had been guilty of any bad action or collusion, or had instigated the nuns to any deceit during the investigation.

The prior of the Carmelites next advanced and made the same declaration, taking the oath in the same manner, holding the pyx over his head; and further calling down on himself and his brethren the curse of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram if they had sinned during this inquiry. These protestations did not, however, produce the salutary effect intended, some of those present saying aloud that such oaths smacked of sacrilege.

Barré hearing the murmurs, hastened to begin the exorcisms, first advancing to the superior to offer her the holy sacrament: but as soon as she caught sight of him she became terribly convulsed, and attempted to drag the pyx from his hands. Barré, however, by pronouncing the sacred

words, overcame the repulsion of the superior, and succeeded in placing the wafer in her mouth; she, however, pushed it out again with her tongue, as if it made her sick; Barré caught it in his fingers and gave it to her again, at the same time forbidding the demon to make her vomit, and this time she succeeded in partly swallowing the sacred morsel, but complained that it stuck in her throat. At last, in order to get it down, Barré three times gave her water to drink; and then, as always during his exorcisms, he began by interrogating the demon.

"*Per quod pactum ingressus es in corpus hujus puellæ?*" (By what pact didst thou enter the body of this maiden?)

"*Aquâ*" (By water), said the superior.

One of those who had accompanied the bailiff was a Scotchman called Stracan, the head of the Reformed College of Loudun. Hearing this answer, he called on the demon to translate *aquâ* into Gaelic, saying if he gave this proof of having those linguistic attainments which all bad spirits possess, he and those with him would be convinced that the possession was genuine and no deception. Barré, without being in the least taken aback, replied that he would make the demon say it if God permitted, and ordered the spirit to answer in Gaelic. But though he repeated his command twice, it was not obeyed; on the third repetition the superior said—

"*Nimia curiositas*" (Too much curiosity), and on being asked again, said—

"*Deus non volo.*"

This time the poor devil went astray in his conjugation, and confusing the first with the third person, said, "God, I do not wish," which in the context had no meaning. "God does not wish," being the appointed answer.

The Scotchman laughed heartily at this nonsense, and proposed to Barré to let his devil enter into competition with the boys of his seventh form; but Barré, instead of frankly accepting the challenge in the devil's name, hemmed and hawed, and opined that the devil was justified in not satisfying idle curiosity.

"But, sir, you must be aware," said the civil lieutenant, "and if you are not, the manual you hold in your hand will teach you, that the gift of tongues is one of the unfailing symptoms of true possession, and the power to tell what is happening at a distance another."

"Sir," returned Barré, "the devil knows the language very well, but does not wish to speak it; he also knows all your sins, in proof of which, if you so desire, I shall order him to give the list."

"I shall be delighted to hear it," said the civil lieutenant; "be so good as to try the experiment."

Barré was about to approach the superior, when he was held back by the bailiff, who remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct, whereupon Barré assured the magistrate that he had never really intended to do as he threatened.

However, in spite of all Barré's attempts to distract the attention of the bystanders from the subject, they still persisted in desiring to discover the extent of the devil's knowledge of foreign languages, and at their suggestion the bailiff proposed to Barré to try him in Hebrew instead of Gaelic. Hebrew being, according to Scripture, the most ancient language of all, ought to be familiar to the demon, unless indeed he had forgotten it. This idea met with such general applause that Barré was forced to command the possessed nun to say *aqua* in Hebrew. The poor woman, who found it difficult enough to repeat correctly the few Latin words she had learned by rote, made an impatient movement, and said—

"I can't help it; I retract" (*Je renie*).

These words being heard and repeated by those near her produced such an unfavourable impression that one of the Carmelite monks tried to explain them away by declaring that the superior had not said "*Je renie*," but "*Zaquar*," a Hebrew word corresponding to the two Latin words, "*Effudi aquam*" (I threw water about). But the words "*Je renie*" had been heard so distinctly that the monk's assertion was greeted with

jeers, and the sub-prior reprimanded him publicly as a liar. Upon this, the superior had a fresh attack of convulsions, and as all present knew that these attacks usually indicated that the performance was about to end, they withdrew, making very merry over a devil who knew neither Hebrew nor Gaelic, and whose smattering of Latin was so incorrect.

However, as the bailiff and civil lieutenant were determined to clear up every doubt so far as they still felt any, they went once again to the convent at three o'clock the same afternoon. Barré came out to meet them, and took them for a stroll in the convent grounds. During their walk he said to the civil lieutenant that he felt very much surprised that he, who had on a former occasion, by order of the Bishop of Poitiers, laid information against Grandier should be now on his side. The civil lieutenant replied that he would be ready to inform against him again if there were any justification, but at present his object was to arrive at the truth, and in this he felt sure he should be successful. Such an answer was very unsatisfactory to Barré; so, drawing the bailiff aside, he remarked to him that a man among whose ancestors were many persons of condition, several of whom had held positions of much dignity in the Church, and who himself held such an important judicial position, ought to show less incredulity in regard to the possibility of a devil entering into a human body, since if it were proved it would redound to the glory of God and the good of the Church and of religion. The bailiff received this remonstrance with marked coldness, and replied that he hoped always to take justice for his guide, as his duty commanded. Upon this, Barré pursued the subject no farther, but led the way to the superior's apartment.

Just as they entered the room, where a large number of people were already gathered, the superior, catching sight of the pyx which Barré had brought with him, fell once more into convulsions. Barré went towards her, and having asked the demon as usual by what pact he had entered the maiden's body, and received the information that it was by water, continued his examination as follows:—

"*Quis finis pacti?*" (What is the object of this pact?)

"*Impuritas*" (Unchastity).

At these words the bailiff interrupted the exorcist and ordered him to make the demon say in Greek the three words, *finis, pacti, impuritas.* But the superior, who had once already got out of her difficulties by an evasive answer, had again recourse to the same convenient phrase, "*Nimia curiositas,*" with which Barré agreed, saying that they were indeed too much given to curiosity. So the bailiff had to desist from his attempt to make the demon speak Greek, as he had before been obliged to give up trying to make him speak Hebrew and Gaelic. Barré then continued his examination.

"*Quis attulit pactum?*" (Who brought the pact?)

"*Magus*" (The sorcerer).

"*Quale nomen magi?*" (What is the sorcerer's name?)

"*Urbanus*" (Urban).

"*Quis Urbanus? Est-ne Urbanus papa?*" (What Urban? Pope Urban?)

"*Grandier.*"

"*Cujus qualitatis?*" (What is his profession?)

"*Curatus.*"

The enriching of the Latin language by this new and unknown word produced a great effect upon the audience; however, Barré did not pause long enough to allow it to be received with all the consideration it deserved, but went on at once.

"*Quis attulit aquam pacti?*" (Who brought the water of the pact?)

"*Magus*" (The magician).

"*Quâ horâ?*" (At what o'clock?)

"*Septimâ*" (At seven o'clock).

"*An matutinâ?*" (In the morning?)

"*Serò*" (In the evening).

"*Quomodò intravit?*" (How did he enter?)

"*Januâ*" (By the door).

"*Quis vidit?*" (Who saw him?)

"*Tres*" (Three persons).

Here Barré stopped, in order to confirm the testimony of the devil, assuring his hearers that the Sunday after the superior's deliverance from the second possession he along with Mignon and one of the sisters was sitting with her at supper, it being about seven o'clock in the evening, when she showed them drops of water on her arm, and no one could tell where they came from. He had instantly washed her arm in holy water and repeated some prayers, and while he was saying them the breviary of the superior was twice dragged from her hands and thrown at his feet, and when he stooped to pick it up for the second time he got a box on the ear without being able to see the hand that administered it. Then Mignon came up and confirmed what Barré had said in a long discourse, which he wound up by calling down upon his head the most terrible penalties if every word he said were not the exact truth. He then dismissed the assembly, promising to drive out the evil spirit the next day, and exhorting those present to prepare themselves, by penitence and receiving the holy communion, for the contemplation of the wonders which awaited them.

CHAPTER VII

THE last two exorcisms had been so much talked about in the town, that Grandier, although he had not been present, knew everything that had happened, down to the smallest detail, so he once more laid a complaint before the bailiff, in which he represented that the nuns maliciously continued to name him during the exorcisms as the author of their pretended possession, being evidently influenced thereto by his enemies, whereas in fact not only had he had no communication with them, but had never set eyes on them; that in order to prove that they acted under influence it was absolutely necessary that they should be sequestered, it being most unjust that Mignon and Barré, his mortal enemies, should have constant access to them and be able to stay with them night and day, their doing so making the collusion evident and undeniable; that the honour of God was involved, and also that of the petitioner, who had some right to be respected, seeing that he was first in rank among the ecclesiastics of the town.

Taking all this into consideration, he consequently prayed the bailiff to be pleased to order that the nuns suffering from the so-called possession should at once be separated from each other and from their present associates, and placed under the control of clerics assisted by physicians in whose impartiality the petitioner could have confidence; and he further prayed that all this should be performed in spite of any opposition or appeal whatsoever (but without prejudice to the right of appeal), because of the importance of the matter. And in case the bailiff were not pleased to order the sequestration, the petitioner would enter a protest and complaint against his refusal as a withholding of justice.

The bailiff wrote at the bottom of the petition that it would be at once complied with.

After Urbain Grandier had departed, the physicians who had been present at the exorcisms presented themselves before the bailiff, bringing their report with them. In this report they said that they had recognised convulsive movements of the mother superior's body, but that one visit was not sufficient to enable them to make a thorough diagnosis, as the movements above mentioned might arise as well from natural as from supernatural causes; they therefore desired to be afforded opportunity for a thorough examination before being called on to pronounce an opinion. To this end they required permission to spend several days and nights uninterruptedly in the same room with the patients, and to treat them in the presence of other nuns and some of the magistrates. Further, they required that all the food and medicine should pass through the doctors' hands, and that no one should touch the patients except quite openly, or speak to them except in an audible voice. Under these conditions they would undertake to find out the true cause of the convulsions and to make a report of the same.

It being now nine o'clock in the morning, the hour when the exorcisms began, the bailiff went over at once to the convent, and found Barré half way through the mass, and the superior in convulsions. The magistrate entered the church at the moment of the elevation of the Host, and noticed among the kneeling Catholics a young man called Dessentier standing up with his hat on. He ordered him either to uncover or to go away. At this the convulsive movements of the superior became more violent, and she cried out that there were Huguenots in the church, which gave the demon great power over her. Barré asked her how many there were present, and she replied, "Two," thus proving that the devil was no stronger in arithmetic than in Latin; for besides Dessentier, Councillor Abraham Gauthier, one of his brothers, four of his sisters, René Fourneau, a deputy, and an attorney called Angevin, all of the Reformed faith, were present.

As Barré saw that those present were greatly struck by this numerical inaccuracy, he tried to turn their thoughts in another direction by asking the superior if it were true that she knew no Latin. On her replying that she did not know a single word, he held the pyx before her and ordered her to swear by the holy sacrament. She resisted at first, saying loud enough for those around to hear—

"My father, you make me take such solemn oaths that I fear God will punish me."

To this Barré replied—

"My daughter, you must swear for the glory of God."

And she took the oath.

Just then one of the bystanders remarked that the mother superior was in the habit of interpreting the Catechism to her scholars. This she denied, but acknowledged that she used to translate the Paternoster and the Creed for them. As the superior felt herself becoming somewhat confused at this long series of embarrassing questions, she decided on going into convulsions again, but with only moderate success, for the bailiff insisted that the exorcists should ask her where Grandier was at that very moment. Now, as the ritual teaches that one of the proofs of possession is the faculty of telling, when asked, where people are, without seeing them, and as the question was propounded in the prescribed terms, she was bound to answer, so she said that Grandier was in the great hall of the castle.

"That is not correct," said the bailiff, "for before coming here I pointed out a house to Grandier and asked him to stay in it till I came back. If anybody will go there, they will be sure to find him, for he wished to help me to discover the truth without my being obliged to resort to sequestration, which is a difficult measure to take with regard to nuns."

Barré was now ordered to send some of the monks present to the castle, accompanied by a magistrate and a clerk. Barré chose the Carmelite prior, and the bailiff Charles Chauvet, assessor of the bailiwick, Ismaël Boulieau a priest, and Pierre

Thibaut, an articled clerk, who all set out at once to execute their commission, while the rest of those present were to await their return.

Meanwhile the superior, who had not spoken a word since the bailiff's declaration, remained, in spite of repeated exorcisms, dumb, so Barré sent for Sister Claire, saying that one devil would encourage the other. The bailiff entered a formal protest against this step, insisting that the only result of a double exorcism would be to cause confusion, during which suggestions might be conveyed to the superior, and that the proper thing to do was, before beginning new conjurations, to await the return of the messengers. Although the bailiff's suggestion was most reasonable, Barré knew better than to adopt it, for he felt that no matter what it cost he must either get rid of the bailiff and all the other officials who shared his doubts, or find means with the help of Sister Claire to delude them into belief. The lay sister was therefore brought in, in spite of the opposition of the bailiff and the other magistrates, and as they did not wish to seem to countenance a fraud, they all withdrew, declaring that they could no longer look on at such a disgusting comedy. In the courtyard they met their messengers returning, who told them they had gone first to the castle and had searched the great hall and all the other rooms without seeing anything of Grandier; they had then gone to the house mentioned by the bailiff, where they found him for whom they were looking, in the company of Père Véret, the confessor of the nuns, Mathurin Rousseau, and Nicolas Benoît, canons, and Conté, a doctor, from whom they learned that Grandier had not been an instant out of their sight for the last two hours. This being all the magistrates wanted to know, they went home, while their envoys went upstairs and told their story, which produced the effect which might be expected. Thereupon a Carmelite brother wishing to weaken the impression, and thinking that the devil might be more lucky in his second guess than the first, asked the superior where Grandier was just then. She answered without the slightest hesitation that he was walking with the bailiff in the church of

Sainte-Croix. A new deputation was at once sent off, which finding the church empty, went on to the palace, and saw the bailiff presiding at a court. He had gone direct from the convent to the palace, and had not yet seen Grandier. The same day the nuns sent word that they would not consent to any more exorcisms being performed in the presence of the bailiff and the officials who usually accompanied him, and that for the future they were determined to answer no questions before such witnesses.

Grandier learning of this piece of insolence, which prevented the only man on whose impartiality he could reckon from being henceforward present at the exorcisms, once more handed in a petition to the bailiff, begging for the sequestration of the two nuns, no matter at what risk. The bailiff, however, in the interests of the petitioner himself, did not dare to grant this request, for he was afraid that the ecclesiastical authorities would nullify his procedure, on the ground that the convent was not under his jurisdiction.

He, however, summoned a meeting of the principal inhabitants of the town, in order to consult with them as to the best course to take for the public good. The conclusion they arrived at was to write to the attorney-general and to the Bishop of Poitiers, enclosing copies of the reports which had been drawn up, and imploring them to use their authority to put an end to these pernicious intrigues. This was done, but the attorney-general replied that the matter being entirely ecclesiastical the Parliament was not competent to take cognisance of it. As for the bishop, he sent no answer at all.

He was not, however, so silent towards Grandier's enemies; for the ill-success of the exorcisms of November 26th having made increased precautions necessary, they considered it would be well to apply to the bishop for a new commission, wherein he should appoint certain ecclesiastics to represent him during the exorcisms to come. Barré himself went to Poitiers to make this request. It was immediately granted, and the bishop appointed Bazile, senior canon of Champigny, and Demorans, senior canon of Thouars, both of whom were

related to some of Grandier's adversaries. The following is a copy of the new commission :—

"Henri-Louis le Châtaignier de la Rochepezai, by the divine will Bishop of Poitiers, to the senior canons of the Châtelet de Saint-Pierre de Thouars et de Champigny-sur-Vèse, greeting:

"We by these presents command you to repair to the town of Loudun, to the convent of the nuns of Sainte-Ursule, to be present at the exorcisms which will be undertaken by Sieur Barré upon some nuns of the said convent who are tormented by evil spirits, we having thereto authorised the said Barré. You are also to draw up a report of all that takes place, and for this purpose are to take any clerk you may choose with you.

"Given and done at Poitiers, November 28th, 1632.

"(*Signed*) HENRI-LOUIS, Bishop of Poitiers.

"(*Countersigned*) By order of the said Lord Bishop,

"MICHELET"

These two commissioners having been notified beforehand, went to Loudun, where Marescot, one of the queen's chaplains, arrived at the same time; for the pious queen, Anne of Austria, had heard so many conflicting accounts of the possession of the Ursuline nuns, that she desired, for her own edification, to get to the bottom of the affair. We can judge what importance the case was beginning to assume by its being already discussed at court.

In spite of the notice which had been sent them that the nuns would not receive them, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant fearing that the royal envoy would allow himself to be imposed on, and would draw up an account which would cast doubt on the facts contained in their reports, betook themselves to the convent on December 1st, the day on which the exorcisms were to recommence, in the presence of the new commissioners. They were accompanied by their assessor, by the provost's lieutenant, and a clerk. They had to knock repeatedly before anyone seemed to hear them, but at length

a nun opened the door and told them they could not enter, being suspected of bad faith, as they had publicly declared that the possession was a fraud and an imposture. The bailiff, without wasting his time arguing with the sister, asked to see Barré, who soon appeared arrayed in his priestly vestments, and surrounded by several persons, among whom was the queen's chaplain. The bailiff complained that admittance had been refused to him and those with him, although he had been authorised to visit the convent by the Bishop of Poitiers. Barré replied that he would not hinder their coming in, as far as it concerned him.

"We are here with the intention of entering," said the bailiff, "and also for the purpose of requesting you to put one or two questions to the demon which we have drawn up in terms which are in accordance with what is prescribed in the ritual. I am sure you will not refuse," he added, turning with a bow to Marescot, "to make this experiment in the presence of the queen's chaplain, since by that means all those suspicions of imposture can be removed which are unfortunately so rife concerning this business."

"In that respect I shall do as I please, and not as you order me," was the insolent reply of the exorcist.

"It is, however, your duty to follow legal methods in your procedure," returned the bailiff, "if you sincerely desire the truth; for it would be an affront to God to perform a spurious miracle in His honour, and a wrong to the Catholic faith, whose power is in its truth, to attempt to give adventitious lustre to its doctrines by the aid of fraud and deception."

"Sir," said Barré, "I am a man of honour, I know my duty and I shall discharge it; but as to yourself, I must recall to your recollection that the last time you were here you left the chapel in anger and excitement, which is an attitude of mind most unbecoming in one whose duty it is to administer justice."

Seeing that these recriminations would have no practical result, the magistrates cut them short by reiterating their demand for admittance; and on this being refused, they

reminded the exorcists that they were expressly prohibited from asking any questions tending to cast a slur on the character of any person or persons whatever, under pain of being treated as disturbers of the public peace. At this warning Barré, saying that he did not acknowledge the bailiff's jurisdiction, shut the door in the faces of the two magistrates.

As there was no time to lose if the machinations of his enemies were to be brought to nought, the bailiff and the civil lieutenant advised Grandier to write to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who had once already extricated him from imminent danger, setting forth at length his present predicament; this letter, accompanied by the reports drawn up by the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, were sent off at once by a trusty messenger to His Grace of Escoubleau de Sourdis. As soon as he received the despatches, the worthy prelate seeing how grave was the crisis, and that the slightest delay might be fatal to Grandier, set out at once for his abbey of Saint-Jouin-les-Marmes, the place in which he had already vindicated in so striking a manner the upright character of the poor persecuted priest by a fearless act of justice.

It is not difficult to realise what a blow his arrival was to those who held a brief for the evil spirits in possession; hardly had he reached Saint-Jouin than he sent his own physician to the convent with orders to see the afflicted nuns and to test their condition, in order to judge if the convulsions were real or simulated. The physician arrived, armed with a letter from the archbishop, ordering Mignon to permit the bearer to make a thorough examination into the position of affairs. Mignon received the physician with all the respect due to him who sent him, but expressed great regret that he had not come a little sooner, as, thanks to his (Mignon's) exertions and those of Barré, the devils had been exorcised the preceding day. He nevertheless introduced the archbishop's envoy to the presence of the superior and Sister Claire, whose demeanour was as calm as if they had never been disturbed by any agitating experiences. Mignon's statement being thus confirmed, the doctor returned to Saint-Jouin, the only thing to

which he could bear testimony being the tranquillity which reigned at the moment in the convent.

The imposture being now laid so completely bare, the archbishop was convinced that the infamous persecutions to which it had led would cease at once and for ever; but Grandier, better acquainted with the character of his adversaries, arrived on the 27th of December at the abbey and laid a petition at the archbishop's feet. In this document he set forth: that his enemies having formerly brought false and slanderous accusations against him of which, through the justice of the archbishop, he had been able to clear himself, had employed themselves during the last three months in inventing and publishing as a fact that the petitioner had sent evil spirits into the bodies of nuns in the Ursuline convent of Loudun, although he had never spoken to any of the sisterhood there; that the guardianship of the sisters who, it was alleged, were possessed, and the task of exorcism, had been entrusted to Jean Mignon and Pierre Barré, who had in the most unmistakable manner shown themselves to be the mortal enemies of the petitioner; that in the reports drawn up by the said Jean Mignon and Pierre Barré, which differed so widely from those made by the bailiff and the civil lieutenant, it was boastfully alleged that three or four times devils had been driven out, but that they had succeeded in returning and taking possession of their victims again and again, in virtue of successive pacts entered into between the prince of darkness and the petitioner; that the aim of these reports and allegations was to destroy the reputation of the petitioner and excite public opinion against him; that although the demons had been put to flight by the arrival of His Grace, yet it was too probable that as soon as he was gone they would return to the charge; that if, such being the case, the powerful support of the archbishop were not available, the innocence of the petitioner, no matter how strongly established, would by the cunning tactics of his inveterate foes be obscured and denied: he, the petitioner, therefore prayed that, should the foregoing reasons prove on examination to be cogent, the archbishop

would be pleased to prohibit Barré, Mignon, and their partisans, whether among the secular or the regular clergy, from taking part in any future exorcisms, should such be necessary, or in the control of any persons alleged to be possessed; furthermore, petitioner prayed that His Grace would be pleased to appoint as a precautionary measure such other clerics and lay persons as seemed to him suitable, to superintend the administration of food and medicine and the rite of exorcism to those alleged to be possessed, and that all the treatment should be carried out in the presence of magistrates.

The archbishop accepted the petition, and wrote below it:—

"The present petition having been seen by us and the opinion of our attorney having been taken in the matter, we have sent the petitioner in advance of our said attorney back to Poitiers, that justice may be done him, and in the meantime we have appointed Sieur Barré, Père l'Escaye, a Jesuit residing in Poitiers, Père Gaut of the Oratory, residing at Tours, to conduct the exorcisms, should such be necessary, and have given them an order to this effect.

"It is forbidden to all others to meddle with the said exorcisms, on pain of being punished according to law."

It will be seen from the above that His Grace the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in his enlightened and generous exercise of justice, had foreseen and provided for every possible contingency; so that as soon as his orders were made known to the exorcists the possession ceased at once and completely, and was no longer even talked of. Barré withdrew to Chinon, the senior canons rejoined their chapters, and the nuns, happily rescued for the time, resumed their life of retirement and tranquillity. The archbishop nevertheless urged on Grandier the prudence of effecting an exchange of benefices, but he replied that he would not at that moment change his simple living of Loudun for a bishopric.

CHAPTER VIII

THE exposure of the plot was most prejudicial to the prosperity of the Ursuline community: the spurious possession, far from bringing to their convent an increase of subscriptions and enhancing their reputation, as Mignon had promised, had ended for them in open shame, while in private they suffered from straitened circumstances, for the parents of their boarders hastened to withdraw their daughters from the convent, and the nuns in losing their pupils lost their sole source of income. Their fall in the estimation of the public filled them with despair, and it leaked out that they had had several altercations with their director, during which they reproached him for having, by making them commit such a great sin, overwhelmed them with infamy and reduced them to misery, instead of securing for them the great spiritual and temporal advantages he had promised them. Mignon, although devoured by hate, was obliged to remain quiet, but he was none the less as determined as ever to have revenge, and as he was one of those men who never give up while a gleam of hope remains, and whom no waiting can tire, he bided his time, avoiding notice, apparently resigned to circumstances, but keeping his eyes fixed on Grandier, ready to seize on the first chance of recovering possession of the prey that had escaped his hands. And unluckily the chance soon presented itself.

It was now 1633: Richelieu was at the height of his power, carrying out his work of destruction, making castles fall before him where he could not make heads fall, in the spirit of John Knox's words, "Destroy the nests and the crows will disappear." Now one of these nests was the crenellated castle of Loudun, and Richelieu had therefore ordered its demolition.

The person appointed to carry out this order was a man such as those whom Louis XI had employed fifty years earlier to destroy the feudal system, and Robespierre one hundred and fifty years later to destroy the aristocracy. Every woodman needs an axe, every reaper a sickle, and Richelieu found the instrument he required in de Laubardemont, Councillor of State.

But he was an instrument full of intelligence, detecting by the manner in which he was wielded the moving passion of the wielder, and adapting his whole nature with marvellous dexterity to gratify that passion according to the character of him whom it possessed; now by a rough and ready impetuosity, now by a deliberate and hidden advance; equally willing to strike with the sword or to poison by calumny, as the man who moved him lusted for the blood or sought to accomplish the dishonour of his victim.

M. de Laubardemont arrived at Loudun during the month of August 1633, and in order to carry out his mission addressed himself to Sieur Memin de Silly, prefect of the town, that old friend of the cardinal's whom Mignon and Barré, as we have said, had impressed so favourably. Memin saw in the arrival of Laubardemont a special intimation that it was the will of Heaven that the seemingly lost cause of those in whom he took such a warm interest should ultimately triumph. He presented Mignon and all his friends to M. Laubardemont, who received them with much cordiality. They talked of the mother superior, who was a relation, as we have seen, of M. de Laubardemont, and exaggerated the insult offered her by the decree of the archbishop, saying it was an affront to the whole family; and before long the one thing alone which occupied the thoughts of the conspirators and the councillor was how best to draw down upon Grandier the anger of the cardinal-duke. A way soon opened.

The queen mother, Marie de Médici, had among her attendants a woman called Hammon, to whom, having once had occasion to speak, she had taken a fancy, and given a post near her person. In consequence of this whim, Hammon came to be regarded as a person of some importance in the

queen's household. Hammon was a native of Loudun, and had passed the greater part of her youth there with her own people, who belonged to the lower classes. Grandier had been her confessor, and she attended his church, and as she was lively and clever he enjoyed talking to her, so that at length an intimacy sprang up between them. It so happened at a time when he and the other ministers were in momentary disgrace, that a satire full of biting wit and raillery appeared, directed especially against the cardinal, and this satire had been attributed to Hammon, who was known to share, as was natural, her mistress's hatred of Richelieu. Protected as she was by the queen's favour, the cardinal had found it impossible to punish Hammon, but he still cherished a deep resentment against her.

It now occurred to the conspirators to accuse Grandier of being the real author of the satire; and it was asserted that he had learned from Hammon all the details of the cardinal's private life, the knowledge of which gave so much point to the attack on him; if they could once succeed in making Richelieu believe this, Grandier was lost.

This plan being decided on, M de Laubardemont was asked to visit the convent, and the devils knowing what an important personage he was, flocked thither to give him a worthy welcome. Accordingly, the nuns had attacks of the most indescribably violent convulsions, and M. de Laubardemont returned to Paris convinced as to the reality of their possession.

The first word the councillor of state said to the cardinal about Urbain Grandier showed him that he had taken useless trouble in inventing the story about the satire, for by the bare mention of his name he was able to arouse the cardinal's anger to any height he wished. The fact was, that when Richelieu had been Prior of Coussay he and Grandier had had a quarrel on a question of etiquette, the latter as priest of Loudun having claimed precedence over the prior, and carried his point. The cardinal had noted the affront in his bloodstained tablets, and at the first hint de Laubardemont found him as eager to bring about Grandier's ruin as was the councillor himself.

De Laubardemont was at once granted the following commission:—

"Sieur de Laubardemont, Councillor of State and Privy Councillor, will betake himself to Loudun, and to whatever other places may be necessary, to institute proceedings against Grandier on all the charges formerly preferred against him, and on other facts which have since come to light, touching the possession by evil spirits of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun, and of other persons, who are said likewise to be tormented of devils through the evil practices of the said Grandier; he will diligently investigate everything from the beginning that has any bearing either on the said possession or on the exorcisms, and will forward to us his report thereon, and the reports and other documents sent in by former commissioners and delegates, and will be present at all future exorcisms, and take proper steps to obtain evidence of the said facts, that they may be clearly established; and, above all, will direct, institute, and carry through the said proceedings against Grandier and all others who have been involved with him in the said case, until definitive sentence be passed; and in spite of any appeal or countercharge this cause will not be delayed (but without prejudice to the right of appeal in other causes), on account of the nature of the crimes, and no regard will be paid to any request for postponement made by the said Grandier. His Majesty commands all governors, provincial lieutenants-general, bailiffs, seneschals, and other municipal authorities, and all subjects whom it may concern, to give every assistance in arresting and imprisoning all persons whom it may be necessary to put under constraint, if they shall be required so to do."

Furnished with this order, which was equivalent to a condemnation, de Laubardemont arrived at Loudun, the 5th of December 1633, at nine o'clock in the evening; and to avoid being seen he alighted in a suburb at the house of one maître Paul Aubin, king's usher, and son-in-law of Memin de Silly. His arrival was kept so secret that neither Grandier nor his friends knew

of it, but Memin, Hervé, Menuau, and Mignon were notified, and immediately called on him. De Laubardemont received them, commission in hand, but broad as it was, it did not seem to them sufficient, for it contained no order for Grandier's arrest, and Grandier might fly. De Laubardemont smiling at the idea that he could be so much in fault, drew from his pocket an order in duplicate, in case one copy should be lost, dated like the commission November 30th, signed LOUIS, and countersigned PHILIPPEAUX. It was conceived in the following terms:—

"LOUIS, etc. etc.

"We have entrusted these presents to Sieur de Laubardemont, Privy Councillor, to empower the said Sieur de Laubardemont to arrest Grandier and his accomplices and imprison them in a secure place, with orders to all provosts, marshals, and other officers, and to all our subjects in general, to lend whatever assistance is necessary to carry out above order; and they are commanded by these presents to obey all orders given by the said Sieur; and all governors and lieutenants-general are also hereby commanded to furnish the said Sieur with whatever aid he may require at their hands."

This document being the completion of the other, it was immediately resolved, in order to show that they had the royal authority at their back, and as a preventive measure, to arrest Grandier at once, without any preliminary investigation. They hoped by this step to intimidate any official who might still be inclined to take Grandier's part, and any witness who might be disposed to testify in his favour. Accordingly, they immediately sent for Guillaume Aubin, sieur de Lagrange and provost's lieutenant. De Laubardemont communicated to him the commission of the cardinal and the order of the king, and requested him to arrest Grandier early next morning. M. de Lagrange could not deny the two signatures, and answered that he would obey; but as he foresaw from their manner of going to work that the proceedings about to be instituted would be

an assassination and not a fair trial, he sent, in spite of being a distant connection of Memin, whose daughter was married to his (Lagrange's) brother, to warn Grandier of the orders he had received. But Grandier with his usual intrepidity, while thanking Lagrange for his generous message, sent back word that, secure in his innocence and relying on the justice of God, he was determined to stand his ground.

So Grandier remained, and his brother, who slept beside him, declared that his sleep that night was as quiet as usual. The next morning he rose, as was his habit, at six o'clock, took his breviary in his hand, and went out with the intention of attending matins at the church of Sainte-Croix. He had hardly put his foot over the threshold before Lagrange, in the presence of Memin, Mignon, and the other conspirators, who had come out to gloat over the sight, arrested him in the name of the king. He was at once placed in the custody of Jean Pouguet, an archer in His Majesty's guards, and of the archers of the provosts of Loudun and Chinon, to be taken to the castle of Angers. Meanwhile a search was instituted, and the royal seal affixed to the doors of his apartments, to his presses, his other articles of furniture—in fact, to every thing and place in the house; but nothing was found that tended to compromise him, except an essay against the celibacy of priests, and two sheets of paper whereon were written in another hand than his, some love-poems in the taste of that time.

CHAPTER IX

FOR four months Grandier languished in prison, and, according to the report of Michelon, commandant of Angers, and of Pierre Bacher, his confessor, he was, during the whole period, a model of patience and firmness, passing his days in reading good books or in writing prayers and meditations, which were afterwards produced at his trial. Meanwhile, in spite of the urgent appeals of Jeanne Estève, mother of the accused, who, although seventy years of age, seemed to recover her youthful strength and activity in the desire to save her son, Laubardement continued the examination, which was finished on April 4th. Urbain was then brought back from Angers to Loudun.

An extraordinary cell had been prepared for him in a house belonging to Mignon, and which had formerly been occupied by a sergeant named Bontems, once clerk to Trinquant, who had been a witness for the prosecution in the first trial. It was on the topmost storey; the windows had been walled up, leaving only one small slit open, and even this opening was secured by enormous iron bars; and by an exaggeration of caution the mouth of the fireplace was furnished with a grating, lest the devils should arrive through the chimney to free the sorcerer from his chains. Furthermore, two holes in the corners of the room, so formed that they were unnoticeable from within, allowed a constant watch to be kept over Grandier's movements by Bontems' wife, a precaution by which they hoped to learn something that would help them in the coming exorcisms. In this room, lying on a little straw, and almost without light, Grandier wrote the following letter to his mother:—

"My Mother,—I received your letter and everything you sent me except the woollen stockings. I endure my affliction with patience, and feel more pity for you than for myself. I am very much inconvenienced for want of a bed; try and have mine brought to me, for my mind will give way if my body has no rest: if you can, send me a breviary, a Bible, and a St. Thomas for my consolation; and above all, do not grieve for me. I trust that God will bring my innocence to light. Commend me to my brother and sister, and all our good friends.—I am, mother, your dutiful son and servant,

"Grandier"

While Grandier had been in prison at Angers the cases of possession at the convent had miraculously multiplied, for it was no longer only the superior and Sister Claire who had fallen a prey to the evil spirits, but also several other sisters, who were divided into three groups as follows, and separated:—

The superior, with Sisters Louise des Anges and Anne de Sainte-Agnès, were sent to the house of Sieur Delaville, advocate, legal adviser to the sisterhood; Sisters Claire and Catherine de la Présentation were placed in the house of Canon Maurat; Sisters Elisabeth de la Croix, Monique de Sainte-Marthe, Jeanne du Sainte-Esprit, and Séraphique Archer were in a third house.

A general supervision was undertaken by Memin's sister, the wife of Moussant, who was thus closely connected with two of the greatest enemies of the accused, and to her Bontems' wife told all that the superior needed to know about Grandier. Such was the manner of the sequestration!

The choice of physicians was no less extraordinary. Instead of calling in the most skilled practitioners of Angers, Tours, Poitiers, or Saumur, all of them, except Daniel Roger of Loudun, came from the surrounding villages, and were men of no education: one of them, indeed, had failed to obtain either degree or licence, and had been obliged to leave Saumur in consequence; another had been employed in a small shop

to take goods home, a position he had exchanged for the more lucrative one of quack.

There was just as little sense of fairness and propriety shown in the choice of the apothecary and surgeon. The apothecary, whose name was Adam, was Mignon's first cousin, and had been one of the witnesses for the prosecution at Grandier's first trial; and as on that occasion he had libelled a young girl of Loudun, he had been sentenced by a decree of the Parliament to make a public apology. And yet, though his hatred of Grandier in consequence of this humiliation was so well known,—perhaps for that very reason,—it was to him the duty of dispensing and administering the prescriptions was entrusted, no one supervising the work even so far as to see that the proper doses were given, or taking note whether for sedatives he did not sometimes substitute stimulating and exciting drugs, capable of producing real convulsions. The surgeon Mannouri was still more unsuitable, for he was a nephew of Memin de Silly, and brother of the nun who had offered the most determined opposition to Grandier's demand for sequestration of the possessed sisters, during the second series of exorcisms. In vain did the mother and brother of the accused present petitions setting forth the incapacity of the doctors and the hatred of Grandier professed by the apothecary; they could not, even at their own expense, obtain certified copies of any of these petitions, although they had witnesses ready to prove that Adam had once in his ignorance dispensed *crocus metallorum* for *crocus martis*—a mistake which had caused the death of the patient for whom the prescription was made up. In short, so determined were the conspirators that this time Grandier should be done to death, that they had not even the decency to conceal the infamous methods by which they had arranged to attain this result.

The examination was carried on with vigour. As one of the first formalities would be the identification of the accused, Grandier published a memorial in which he recalled the case of Saint-Anastasius at the Council of Tyre, who had been accused of immorality by a fallen woman whom he had never seen

before. When this woman entered the hall of justice in order to swear to her deposition, a priest named Timothy went up to her and began to talk to her as if he were Anastasius; falling into the trap, she answered as if she recognised him, and thus the innocence of the saint was shown forth. Grandier therefore demanded that two or three persons of his own height and complexion should be dressed exactly like himself, and with him should be allowed to confront the nuns. As he had never seen any of them, and was almost certain they had never seen him, they would not be able, he felt sure, to point him out with certainty, in spite of the allegations of undue intimacy with themselves they brought against him. This demand showed such conscious innocence that it was embarrassing to answer, so no notice was taken of it.

Meanwhile the Bishop of Poitiers, who felt much elated at getting the better of the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who of course was powerless against an order issued by the cardinal-duke, took exception to Père l'Escaye and Père Gaut, the exorcists appointed by his superior, and named instead his own chaplain, who had been judge at Grandier's first trial, and had passed sentence on him, and Père Lactance, a Franciscan monk. These two, making no secret of the side with which they sympathised, put up on their arrival at Nicolas Moussant's, one of Grandier's most bitter enemies; on the following day they went to the superior's apartments and began their exorcisms. The first time the superior opened her lips to reply, Père Lactance perceived that she knew almost no Latin, and consequently would not shine during the exorcism, so he ordered her to answer in French, although he still continued to exorcise her in Latin; and when someone was bold enough to object, saying that the devil, according to the ritual, knew all languages living and dead, and ought to reply in the same language in which he was addressed, the father declared that the incongruity was caused by the pact, and that moreover some devils were more ignorant than peasants.

Following these exorcists, and two Carmelite monks, named Pierre de Saint-Thomas and Pierre de Saint-Mathurin, who had,

from the very beginning, pushed their way in when anything was going on, came four Capuchins sent by Père Joseph, head of the Franciscans, "His grey Eminence," as he was called, and whose names were Pères Luc, Tranquille, Potais, and Elisée; so that a much more rapid advance could be made than hitherto by carrying on the exorcisms in four different places at once—viz., in the convent, and in the churches of Sainte-Croix, Saint-Pierre du Martroy, and Notre-Dame du Château. Very little of importance took place, however, on the first two occasions, the 15th and 16th of April; for the declarations of the doctors were most vague and indefinite, merely saying that the things they had seen were supernatural, surpassing their knowledge and the rules of medicine.

The ceremony of the 23rd April presented, however, some points of interest. The superior, in reply to the interrogations of Père Lactance, stated that the demon had entered her body under the forms of a cat, a dog, a stag, and a buck-goat.

"*Quoties?*" (How often?), inquired the exorcist.

"I didn't notice the day," replied the superior, mistaking the word *quoties* for *quando* (when).

It was probably to revenge herself for this error that the superior declared the same day that Grandier had on his body five marks made by the devil, and that though his body was else insensible to pain, he was vulnerable at those spots. Mannouri, the surgeon, was therefore ordered to verify this assertion, and the day appointed for the verification was the 26th.

In virtue of this mandate Mannouri presented himself early on that day at Grandier's prison, caused him to be stripped naked and cleanly shaven, then ordered him to be laid on a table and his eyes bandaged. But the devil was wrong again: Grandier had only two marks, instead of five—one on the shoulder-blade, and the other on the thigh.

Then took place one of the most abominable performances that can be imagined. Mannouri held in his hand a probe, with a hollow handle, into which the needle slipped when a spring was touched: when Mannouri applied the probe to those parts of Grandier's body which, according to the superior,

were insensible, he touched the spring, and the needle, while seeming to bury itself in the flesh, really retreated into the handle, thus causing no pain; but when he touched one of the marks said to be vulnerable, he left the needle fixed, and drove it in to the depth of several inches. The first time he did this it drew from poor Grandier, who was taken unprepared, such a piercing cry that it was heard in the street by the crowd which had gathered round the door. From the mark on the shoulder-blade with which he had commenced, Mannouri passed to that on the thigh, but though he plunged the needle in to its full depth Grandier uttered neither cry nor groan, but went on quietly repeating a prayer, and notwithstanding that Mannouri stabbed him twice more through each of the two marks, he could draw nothing from his victim but prayers for his tormentors.

M. de Laubardemont was present at this scene.

The next day the devil was addressed in such forcible terms that an acknowledgment was wrung from him that Grandier's body bore, not five, but two marks only; and also, to the vast admiration of the spectators, he was able this time to indicate their precise situation.

Unfortunately for the demon, a joke in which he indulged on this occasion detracted from the effect of the above proof of cleverness. Having been asked why he had refused to speak on the preceding Saturday, he said he had not been at Loudun on that day, as the whole morning he had been occupied in accompanying the soul of a certain Le Proust, attorney to the Parliament of Paris, to hell. This answer awoke such doubts in the breasts of some of the laymen present that they took the trouble to examine the register of deaths, and found that no one of the name of Le Proust, belonging to any profession whatever, had died on that date. This discovery rendered the devil less terrible, and perhaps less amusing.

Meantime the progress of the other exorcisms met with like interruptions. Père Pierre de Saint-Thomas, who conducted the operations in the Carmelite church, asked one of the possessed sisters where Grandier's books of magic were; she replied that they were kept at the house of a certain young girl, whose name

she gave, and who was the same to whom Adam had been forced to apologise. De Laubardemont, Moussant, Hervé, and Meunau hastened at once to the house indicated, searched the rooms and the presses, opened the chests and the wardrobes and all the secret places in the house, but in vain. On their return to the church, they reproached the devil for having deceived them, but he explained that a niece of the young woman had removed the books. Upon this, they hurried to the niece's dwelling, but unluckily she was not at home, having spent the whole day at a certain church making her devotions, and when they went thither, the priests and attendants averred that she had not gone out all day; so notwithstanding the desire of the exorcists to oblige Adam they were forced to let the matter drop.

These two false statements increased the number of unbelievers; but it was announced that a most interesting performance would take place on May 4th; indeed, the programme when issued was varied enough to arouse general curiosity. Asmodeus was to raise the superior two feet from the ground, and the fiends Eazas and Cerberus, in emulation of their leader, would do as much for two other nuns; while a fourth devil, named Béhérit, would go farther still, and, greatly daring, would attack M. de Laubardemont himself, and, having spirited his councillor's cap from his head, would hold it suspended in the air for the space of a *Miserere*. Furthermore, the exorcists announced that six of the strongest men in the town would try to prevent the contortions of the weakest of the convulsed nuns, and would fail.

It need hardly be said that the prospect of such an entertainment filled the church on the appointed day to overflowing. Père Lactance began by calling on Asmodeus to fulfil his promise of raising the superior from the ground. She began, hereupon, to perform various evolutions on her mattress, and at one moment it seemed as if she were really suspended in the air; but one of the spectators lifted her dress and showed that she was only standing on tiptoe, which, though it might be clever, was not miraculous. Shouts of laughter rent the air, which had such an intimidating effect on Eazas and Cerberus

that not all the adjurations of the exorcists could extract the slightest response. Béhérit was their last hope, and he replied that he was prepared to lift up M. de Laubardemont's cap, and would do so before the expiration of a quarter of an hour.

We must here remark that this time the exorcisms took place in the evening, instead of in the morning as hitherto; and it was now growing dark, and darkness is favourable to illusions. Several of the unbelieving ones present, therefore, began to call attention to the fact that the quarter of an hour's delay would necessitate the employment of artificial light during the next scene. They also noticed that M. de Laubardemont had seated himself apart and immediately beneath one of the arches in the vaulted roof, through which a hole had been drilled for the passage of the bell-rope. They therefore slipped out of the church, and up into the belfry, where they hid. In a few moments a man appeared who began to work at something. They sprang on him and seized his wrists, and found in one of his hands a thin line of horsehair, to one end of which a hook was attached. The holder being frightened, dropped the line and fled, and although M. de Laubardemont, the exorcists, and the spectators waited, expecting every moment that the cap would rise into the air, it remained quite firm on the owner's head, to the no small confusion of Père Lactance, who, all unwitting of the fiasco, continued to adjure Béhérit to keep his word—of course without the least effect.

Altogether, this performance of May 4th went anything but smoothly. Till now no trick had succeeded; never before had the demons been such bunglers. But the exorcists were sure that the last trick would go off without a hitch. This was, that a nun, held by six men chosen for their strength, would succeed in extricating herself from their grasp, despite their utmost efforts. Two Carmelites and two Capuchins went through the audience and selected six giants from among the porters and messengers of the town.

This time the devil answered expectations by showing that if he was not clever he was strong, for although the six men tried to hold her down upon her mattress, the superior was seized

with such terrible convulsions that she escaped from their hands, throwing down one of those who tried to detain her. This experiment, thrice renewed, succeeded thrice, and belief seemed about to return to the assembly, when a physician of Saumur named Duncan, suspecting trickery, entered the choir, and, ordering the six men to retire, said he was going to try and hold the superior down unaided, and if she escaped from his hands he would make a public apology for his unbelief. M. de Laubardemont tried to prevent this test, by objecting to Duncan as an atheist, but as Duncan was greatly respected on account of his skill and probity, there was such an outcry at this interference from the entire audience that the commissioner was forced to let him have his way. The six porters were therefore dismissed, but instead of resuming their places among the spectators they left the church by the sacristy, while Duncan approaching the bed on which the superior had again lain down, seized her by the wrist, and making certain that he had a firm hold, he told the exorcists to begin.

Never up to that time had it been so clearly shown that the conflict going on was between public opinion and the private aims of a few. A hush fell on the church; everyone stood motionless in silent expectancy.

The moment Père Lactance uttered the sacred words the convulsions of the superior recommenced; but it seemed as if Duncan had more strength than his six predecessors together, for twist and writhe and struggle as she would, the superior's wrist remained none the less firmly clasped in Duncan's hand. At length she fell back on her bed exhausted, exclaiming—

"It's no use, it's no use! He's holding me!"

"Release her arm!" shouted Père Lactance in a rage. "How can the convulsions take place if you hold her that way?"

"If she is really possessed by a demon," answered Duncan aloud, "he should be stronger than I; for it is stated in the ritual that among the symptoms of possession is strength beyond one's years, beyond one's condition, and beyond what is natural."

"That is badly argued," said Lactance sharply: "a demon

outside the body is indeed stronger than you, but when enclosed in a weak frame such as this it cannot show such strength, for its efforts are proportioned to the strength of the body it possesses."

"Enough!" said M. de Laubardemont; "we did not come here to argue with philosophers, but to build up the faith of Christians."

With that he rose up from his chair amidst a terrible uproar, and the assembly dispersed in the utmost disorder, as if they were leaving a theatre rather than a church.

The ill success of this exhibition caused a cessation of events of interest for some days. The result was that a great number of noblemen and other people of quality who had come to Loudun expecting to see wonders and had been shown only commonplace transparent tricks, began to think it was not worth while remaining any longer, and went their several ways—a defection much bewailed by Père Tranquille in a little work which he published on this affair.

"Many," he says, "came to see miracles at Loudun, but finding the devils did not give them the signs they expected, they went away dissatisfied, and swelled the numbers of the unbelieving."

It was determined, therefore, in order to keep the town full, to predict some great event which would revive curiosity and increase faith. Père Lactance therefore announced that on the 20th of May three of the seven devils dwelling in the superior would come out, leaving three wounds in her left side, with corresponding holes in her chemise, bodice, and dress. The three parting devils were Asmodeus, Grésil des Trônes, and Aman des Puissances. He added that the superior's hands would be bound behind her back at the time the wounds were given.

On the appointed day the church of Sainte-Croix was filled to overflowing with sightseers curious to know if the devils would keep their promises better this time than the last. Physicians were invited to examine the superior's side and her clothes; and amongst those who came forward was Duncan, whose

presence guaranteed the public against deception; but none of the exorcists ventured to exclude him, despite the hatred in which they held him—a hatred which they would have made him feel if he had not been under the special protection of Marshal Brezé. The physicians having completed their examination, gave the following certificate:—

"We have found no wound in the patient's side, no rent in her vestments, and our search revealed no sharp instrument hidden in the folds of her dress."

These preliminaries having been got through, Père Lactance questioned her in French for nearly two hours, her answers being in the same language. Then he passed from questions to adjurations: on this, Duncan came forward, and said a promise had been given that the superior's hands should be tied behind her back, in order that there might be no room for suspicion of fraud, and that the moment had now arrived to keep that promise. Père Lactance admitted the justice of the demand, but said as there were many present who had never seen the superior in convulsions such as afflicted the possessed, it would be only fair that she should be exorcised for their satisfaction before binding her. Accordingly he began to repeat the form of exorcism, and the superior was immediately attacked by frightful convulsions, which in a few minutes produced complete exhaustion, so that she fell on her face to the ground, and turning on her left arm and side, remained motionless some instants, after which she uttered a low cry, followed by a groan. The physicians approached her, and Duncan seeing her take away her hand from her left side, seized her arm, and found that the tips of her fingers were stained with blood. They then examined her clothing and body, and found her dress, bodice, and chemise cut through in three places, the cuts being less than an inch long. There were also three scratches beneath the left breast, so slight as to be scarcely more than skin deep, the middle one being a barley-corn in length; still, from all three a sufficient quantity of blood had oozed to stain the chemise above them.

This time the fraud was so glaring that even de Laubardemont

exhibited some signs of confusion because of the number and quality of the spectators. He would not, however, allow the doctors to include in their report their opinion as to the manner in which the wounds were inflicted; but Grandier protested against this in a *Statement of Facts*, which he drew up during the night, and which was distributed next day.

It was as follows:—

"That if the superior had not groaned the physicians would not have removed her clothes, and would have suffered her to be bound, without having the least idea that the wounds were already made; that then the exorcists would have commanded the devils to come forth, leaving the traces they had promised; that the superior would then have gone through the most extraordinary contortions of which she was capable, and have had a long fit of convulsions, at the end of which she would have been delivered from the three demons, and the wounds would have been found in her body; that her groans, which had betrayed her, had by God's will thwarted the best-laid plans of men and devils. Why do you suppose," he went on to ask, "that clean incised wounds, such as a sharp blade would make, were chosen for a token, seeing that the wounds left by devils resemble burns? Was it not because it was easier for the superior to conceal a lancet with which to wound herself slightly, than to conceal any instrument sufficiently heated to burn her? Why do you think the left side was chosen rather than the forehead and nose, if not because she could not give herself a wound in either of those places without being seen by all the spectators? Why was the left side rather than the right chosen, if it were not that it was easier for the superior to wound herself with her right hand, which she habitually used, in the left side than in the right? Why did she turn on her left side and arm and remain so long in that position, if it were not to hide from the bystanders the instrument with which she wounded herself? What do you think caused her to groan, in spite of all her resolution, if it were not the pain of the wound she gave herself? for the most

courageous cannot repress a shudder when the surgeon opens a vein. Why were her finger-tips stained with blood, if it were not that the secreted blade was so small that the fingers which held it could not escape being reddened by the blood it caused to flow? How came it that the wounds were so superficial that they barely went deeper than the cuticle, while devils are known to rend and tear demoniacs when leaving them, if it were not that the superior did not hate herself enough to inflict deep and dangerous wounds?"

Despite this logical protest from Grandier and the barefaced knavery of the exorcists, M. de Laubardemont prepared a report of the expulsion of the three devils, Asmodeus, Grésil, and Aman, from the body of sister Jeanne des Anges, through three wounds below the region of the heart; a report which was afterwards shamelessly used against Grandier, and of which the memorandum still exists, a monument, not so much of credulity and superstition, as of hatred and revenge. Père Lactance, in order to allay the suspicions which the pretended miracle had aroused among the eye-witnesses, asked Balaam, one of the four demons who still remained in the superior's body, the following day, why Asmodeus and his two companions had gone out against their promise, while the superior's face and hands were hidden from the people.

"To lengthen the incredulity of certain people," answered Balaam.

As for Père Tranquille, he published a little volume describing the whole affair, in which, with the irresponsible frivolity of a true Capuchin, he poked fun at those who could not swallow the miracles wholesale.

"They had every reason to feel vexed," he said, "at the small courtesy or civility shown by the demons to persons of their merit and station; but if they had examined their consciences, perhaps they would have found the real reason of their discontent, and, turning their anger against themselves, would have done penance for having come to the exorcisms led by a depraved moral sense and a prying spirit."

Nothing remarkable happened from the 20th May till the 13th June, a day which became noteworthy by reason of the superior's vomiting a quill a finger long. It was doubtless this last miracle which brought the Bishop of Poitiers to Loudun, "not," as he said to those who came to pay their respects to him, "to examine into the genuineness of the possession, but to force those to believe who still doubted, and to discover the classes which Urbain had founded to teach the black art to pupils of both sexes."

Thereupon the opinion began to prevail among the people that it would be prudent to believe in the possession, since the king, the cardinal-duke, and the bishop believed in it, and that continued doubt would lay them open to the charges of disloyalty to their king and their Church, and of complicity in the crimes of Grandier, and thus draw down upon them the ruthless punishment of Laubardemont.

"The reason we feel so certain that our work is pleasing to God is that it is also pleasing to the king," wrote Père Lactance.

The arrival of the bishop was followed by a new exorcism; and of this an eye-witness, who was a good Catholic and a firm believer in possession, has left us a written description, more interesting than any we could give. We shall present it to our readers, word for word, as it stands:—

"On Friday, 23rd June 1634, on the Eve of Saint John, about 3 p.m., the Lord Bishop of Poitiers and M. de Laubardemont being present in the church of Sainte-Croix of Loudun, to continue the exorcisms of the Ursuline nuns, by order of M. de Laubardemont, commissioner, Urbain Grandier, priest-in-charge, accused and denounced as a magician by the said possessed nuns, was brought from his prison to the said church.

"There were produced by the said commissioner to the said Urbain Grandier four pacts mentioned several times by the said possessed nuns at the preceding exorcisms, which the devils who possessed the nuns declared they had made with the said Grandier on several occasions: there was one in especial which Leviathan gave up on Saturday the 17th inst.,

composed of an infant's heart procured at a witches' sabbath, held in Orleans in 1631 ; the ashes of a consecrated wafer, blood, etc., of the said Grandier, whereby Leviathan asserted he had entered the body of the sister, Jeanne des Anges, the superior of the said nuns, and took possession of her with his coadjutors Béhérit, Eazas, and Balaam, on December 8th, 1632. Another such pact was composed of the pips of Grenada oranges, and was given up by Asmodeus and a number of other devils. It had been made to hinder Béhérit from keeping his promise to lift the commissioner's hat two inches from his head and to hold it there the length of a *Miserere*, as a sign that he had come out of the nun. On all these pacts being shown to the said Grandier, he said, without astonishment, but with much firmness and resolution, that he had no knowledge of them whatever, that he had never made them, and had not the skill by which to make them, that he had held no communication with devils, and knew nothing of what they were talking about. A report of all this being made and shown to him, he signed it.

" This done, they brought all the possessed nuns, to the number of eleven or twelve, including three lay sisters, also possessed, into the choir of the said church, accompanied by a great many monks, Carmelites, Capuchins, and Franciscans ; and by three physicians and a surgeon. The sisters on entering made some wanton remarks, calling Grandier their master, and exhibiting great delight at seeing him.

" Thereupon Père Lactance and Gabriel, a Franciscan brother, and one of the exorcists, exhorted all present with great fervour to lift up their hearts to God and to make an act of contrition for the offences committed against His divine majesty, and to pray that the number of their sins might not be an obstacle to the fulfilment of the plans which He in His providence had formed for the promotion of His glory on that occasion, and to give outward proof of their heartfelt grief by repeating the *Confiteor* as a preparation for the blessing of the Lord Bishop of Poitiers. This having been done, he went on to say that the matter in question was of such moment and so important in its relation to the great truths of the Roman

Catholic Church, that this consideration alone ought to be sufficient to excite their devotion; and furthermore, that the affliction of these poor sisters was so peculiar and had lasted so long, that charity impelled all those who had the right to work for their deliverance and the expulsion of the devils, to employ the power entrusted to them with their office in accomplishing so worthy a task by the forms of exorcism prescribed by the Church to its ministers; then addressing Grandier, he said that he having been anointed as a priest belonged to this number, and that he ought to help with all his power and with all his energy, if the bishop were pleased to allow him to do so, and to remit his suspension from authority. The bishop having granted permission, the Franciscan friar offered a stole to Grandier, who, turning towards the prelate, asked him if he might take it. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he passed it round his neck, and on being offered a copy of the ritual, he asked permission to accept it as before, and received the bishop's blessing, prostrating himself at his feet to kiss them; whereupon the *Veni Creator Spiritus* having been sung, he rose, and addressing the bishop, asked—

"'My lord, whom am I to exorcise?'

"The said bishop having replied—

"'These maidens,'

"Grandier again asked—

"'What maidens?'

"'The possessed maidens,' was the answer.

"'That is to say, my lord,' said he, "that I am obliged to believe in the fact of possession. The Church believes in it, therefore I too believe; but I cannot believe that a sorcerer can cause a Christian to be possessed unless the Christian consent.'

"Upon this, some of those present exclaimed that it was heretical to profess such a belief; that the contrary was indubitable, believed by the whole Church and approved by the Sorbonne. To which he replied that his mind on that point was not yet irrevocably made up, that what he had said was simply his own idea, and that in any case he submitted to the

opinion of the whole body of which he was only a member; that nobody was declared a heretic for having doubts, but only for persisting in them, and that what he had advanced was only for the purpose of drawing an assurance from the bishop that in doing what he was about to do he would not be abusing the authority of the Church. Sister Catherine having been brought to him by the Franciscan as the most ignorant of all the nuns, and the least open to the suspicion of being acquainted with Latin, he began the exorcism in the form prescribed by the ritual. But as soon as he began to question her he was interrupted, for all the other nuns were attacked by devils, and uttered strange and terrible noises. Amongst the rest, Sister Claire came near, and reproached him for his blindness and obstinacy, so that he was forced to leave the nun with whom he had begun, and address his words to the said Sister Claire, who during the entire duration of the exorcism continued to talk at random, without paying any heed to Grandier's words, which were also interrupted by the mother superior, to whom he at last gave attention, leaving Sister Claire. But it is to be noted that before beginning to exorcise the superior, he said, speaking in Latin as heretofore, that knowing she understood Latin, he would question her in Greek. To which the devil replied by the mouth of the possessed—

"'Ah! how clever you are! You know it was one of the first conditions of our pact that I was not to answer in Greek.'

"Upon this, he cried, '*O pulchra illusio, egregia evasio!*' (O superb fraud, outrageous evasion!)

"He was then told that he was permitted to exorcise in Greek, provided he first wrote down what he wished to say, and the superior hereupon said that he should be answered in what language he pleased; but it was impossible, for as soon as he opened his mouth all the nuns recommenced their shrieks and paroxysms, showing unexampled despair, and giving way to convulsions, which in each patient assumed a new form, and persisting in accusing Grandier of using magic and the black art to torment them; offering to wring his neck if they were allowed,

and trying to outrage his feelings in every possible way. But this being against the prohibitions of the Church, the priests and monks present worked with the utmost zeal to calm the frenzy which had seized on the nuns. Grandier meanwhile remained calm and unmoved, gazing fixedly at the maniacs, protesting his innocence, and praying to God for protection. Then addressing himself to the bishop and M. de Laubardemont, he implored them by the ecclesiastical and royal authority of which they were the ministers to command these demons to wring his neck, or at least to put a mark in his forehead, if he were guilty of the crime of which they accused him, that the glory of God might be shown forth, the authority of the Church vindicated, and himself brought to confusion, provided that the nuns did not touch him with their hands. But to this the bishop and the commissioner would not consent, because they did not want to be responsible for what might happen to him, neither would they expose the authority of the Church to the wiles of the devils, who might have made some pact on that point with Grandier. Then the exorcists, to the number of eight, having commanded the devils to be silent and to cease their tumult, ordered a brazier to be brought, and into this they threw the pacts one by one, whereupon the convulsions returned with such awful violence and confused cries, rising into frenzied shrieks, and accompanied by such horrible contortions, that the scene might have been taken for an orgy of witches, were it not for the sanctity of the place and the character of those present, of whom Grandier, in outward seeming at least, was the least amazed of any, although he had the most reason. The devils continued their accusations, citing the places, the days, and the hours of their intercourse with him; the first spell he cast on them, his scandalous behaviour, his insensibility, his abjurations of God and the faith. To all this he calmly returned that these accusations were calumnies, and all the more unjust considering his profession; that he renounced Satan and all his fiends, having neither knowledge nor comprehension of them; that in spite of all he was a Christian, and what was more, an anointed priest; that though he knew himself to be a sinful man, yet his

trust was in God and in His Christ; that he had never indulged in such abominations, and that it would be impossible to furnish any pertinent and convincing proof of his guilt.

"At this point no words could express what the senses perceived; eyes and ears received an impression of being surrounded by furies such as had never been gathered together before; and unless accustomed to such ghastly scenes as are those who sacrifice to demons, no one could keep his mind free from astonishment and horror in the midst of such a spectacle. Grandier alone remained unchanged through it all, seemingly insensible to the monstrous exhibitions, singing hymns to the Lord with the rest of the people, as confident as if he were guarded by legions of angels. One of the demons cried out that Beelzebub was standing between him and Père Tranquille the Capuchin, upon which Grandier said to the demon—

"'*Obmutescas!*' (Hold thy peace).

"Upon this the demon began to curse, and said that was their watchword; but they could not hold their peace, because God was infinitely powerful, and the powers of hell could not prevail against Him. Thereupon they all struggled to get at Grandier, threatening to tear him limb from limb, to point out his marks, to strangle him although he was their master; whereupon he seized a chance to say he was neither their master nor their servant, and that it was incredible that they should in the same breath acknowledge him for their master and express a desire to strangle him: on hearing this, the frenzy of the nuns reached its height, and they kicked their slippers into his face.

"'Just look!' said he; 'the shoes drop from the hoofs of their own accord.'

"At length, had it not been for the help and interposition of people in the choir, the nuns in their frenzy would have taken the life of the chief personage in this spectacle; so there was no choice but to take him away from the church and the furies who threatened his life. He was therefore brought back to prison about six o'clock in the evening, and the rest of the day the exorcists were employed in calming the poor sisters—a task of no small difficulty."

Everyone did not regard the possessed sisters with the indulgent eye of the author of the above narrative, and many saw in this terrible exhibition of hysteria and convulsions an infamous and sacrilegious orgy, at which revenge ran riot. There was such difference of opinion about it that it was considered necessary to publish the following proclamation by means of placards on July 2nd:—

"All persons, of whatever rank or profession, are hereby expressly forbidden to traduce, or in any way malign, the nuns and other persons at Loudun possessed by evil spirits; or their exorcists; or those who accompany them either to the places appointed for exorcism or elsewhere; in any form or manner whatever, on pain of a fine of ten thousand livres, or a larger sum and corporal punishment should the case so require; and in order that no one may plead ignorance hereof, this proclamation will be read and published to-day from the pulpits of all the churches, and copies affixed to the church doors and in other suitable public places.

"Done at Loudun, July 2nd, 1634."

This order had great influence with worldly folk, and from that moment, whether their belief was strengthened or not, they no longer dared to express any incredulity. But in spite of that, the judges were put to shame, for the nuns themselves began to repent; and on the day following the impious scene above described, just as Père Lactance began to exorcise Sister Claire in the castle chapel, she rose, and turning towards the congregation, while tears ran down her cheeks, said in a voice that could be heard by all present, that she was going to speak the truth at last in the sight of Heaven. Thereupon she confessed that all that she had said during the last fortnight against Grandier was calumnious and false, and that all her actions had been done at the instigation of the Franciscan Père Lactance, the director Mignon, and the Carmelite brothers. Père Lactance, not in the least taken aback, declared that her confession was a fresh wile of the devil to save

her master Grandier. She then made an urgent appeal to the bishop and to M. de Laubardemont, asking to be sequestered and placed in charge of other priests than those who had destroyed her soul, by making her bear false witness against an innocent man; but they only laughed at the pranks the devil was playing, and ordered her to be at once taken back to the house in which she was then living. When she heard this order, she darted out of the choir, trying to escape through the church door, imploring those present to come to her assistance and save her from everlasting damnation. But such terrible fruit had the proclamation borne that no one dared respond, so she was recaptured and taken back to the house in which she was sequestered, never to leave it again.

CHAPTER X

THE next day a still more extraordinary scene took place. While M. de Laubardemont was questioning one of the nuns, the superior came down into the court, barefooted, in her chemise, and a cord round her neck; and there she remained for two hours, in the midst of a fearful storm, not shrinking before lightning, thunder, or rain, but waiting till M. de Laubardemont and the other exorcists should come out. At length the door opened and the royal commissioner appeared, whereupon Sister Jeanne des Anges, throwing herself at his feet, declared she had not sufficient strength to play the horrible part they had made her learn any longer, and that before God and man she declared Urbain Grandier innocent, saying that all the hatred which she and her companions had felt against him arose from the baffled desires which his comeliness awoke —desires which the seclusion of conventual life made still more ardent. M. de Laubardemont threatened her with the full weight of his displeasure, but she answered, weeping bitterly, that all she now dreaded was her sin, for though the mercy of the Saviour was great, she felt that the crime she had committed could never be pardoned. M. de Laubardemont exclaimed that it was the demon who dwelt in her who was speaking, but she replied that the only demon by whom she had ever been possessed was the spirit of vengeance, and that it was indulgence in her own evil thoughts, and not a pact with the devil, which had admitted him into her heart.

With these words she withdrew slowly, still weeping, and going into the garden, attached one end of the cord round her neck to the branch of a tree, and hanged herself. But some of the sisters who had followed her cut her down before life was extinct.

The same day an order for her strict seclusion was issued for her as for Sister Claire, and the circumstance that she was a relation of M. de Laubardemont did not avail to lessen her punishment in view of the gravity of her fault.

It was impossible to continue the exorcisms: other nuns might be tempted to follow the example of the superior and Sister Claire, and in that case all would be lost. And besides, was not Urbain Grandier well and duly convicted? It was announced, therefore, that the examination had proceeded far enough, and that the judges would consider the evidence and deliver judgment.

This long succession of violent and irregular breaches of law procedure, the repeated denials of his claim to justice, the refusal to let his witnesses appear, or to listen to his defence, all combined to convince Grandier that his ruin was determined on; for the case had gone so far and had attained such publicity that it was necessary either to punish him as a sorcerer and magician or to render a royal commissioner, a bishop, an entire community of nuns, several monks of various orders, many judges of high reputation, and laymen of birth and standing, liable to the penalties incurred by calumniators. But although, as this conviction grew, he confronted it with resignation, his courage did not fail, and holding it to be his duty as a man and a Christian to defend his life and honour to the end, he drew up and published another memorandum, headed *Reasons for Acquittal*, and had copies laid before his judges. It was a weighty and impartial summing up of the whole case, such as a stranger might have written, and began with these words:—

"I entreat you in all humility to consider deliberately and with attention what the Psalmist says in Psalm 82, where he exhorts judges to fulfil their charge with absolute rectitude; they being themselves mere mortals who will one day have to appear before God, the sovereign Judge of the universe, to give an account of their administration. The Lord's Anointed speaks to you to-day who are sitting in judgment, and says—

"'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: He judgeth among the gods.

"'How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

"'Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

"'Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

. . . . . .

"'I have said, Ye are gods: and all of you are children of the Most High.

"'But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.'"

But this appeal, although convincing and dignified, had no influence upon the commission; and on the 18th of August the following verdict and sentence were pronounced:—

"We have declared, and do hereby declare, Urbain Grandier duly accused and convicted of the crimes of magic and witchcraft, and of causing the persons of certain Ursuline nuns of this town and of other females to become possessed of evil spirits, wherefrom other crimes and offences have resulted. By way of reparation therefor, we have sentenced, and do hereby sentence, the said Grandier to make public apology, bare-headed, with a cord around his neck, holding a lighted torch of two pounds weight in his hand, before the west door of the church of Saint-Pierre in the Market Place and before that of Sainte-Ursule, both of this town, and there on bended knee to ask pardon of God and the king and the law, and this done, to be taken to the public square of Sainte-Croix and there to be attached to a stake, set in the midst of a pile of wood, both of which to be prepared there for this purpose, and to be burnt alive, along with the pacts and spells which remain in the hands of the clerk and the manuscript of the book written by the said Grandier against a celibate priesthood, and his ashes to be scattered to the four winds of heaven. And we have declared, and do hereby declare, all and every part of his property

confiscate to the king, the sum of one hundred and fifty livres being first taken therefrom to be employed in the purchase of a copper plate whereon the substance of the present decree shall be engraved, the same to be exposed in a conspicuous place in the said church of Sainte-Ursule, there to remain in perpetuity; and before this sentence is carried out, we order the said Grandier to be put to the question ordinary and extraordinary, so that his accomplices may become known.

"Pronounced at Loudun against the said Grandier this 18th day of August 1634."

On the morning of the day on which this sentence was passed, M. de Laubardemont ordered the surgeon François Fourneau to be arrested at his own house and taken to Grandier's cell, although he was ready to go there of his own free will. In passing through the adjoining room he heard the voice of the accused saying—

"What do you want with me, wretched executioner? Have you come to kill me? You know how cruelly you have already tortured my body. Well, I am ready to die."

On entering the room, Fourneau saw that these words had been addressed to the surgeon Mannouri.

One of the officers of the *grand prévôt de l'hôtel*, to whom M. de Laubardemont lent for the occasion the title of officer of the king's guard, ordered the new arrival to shave Grandier, and not to leave a single hair on his whole body. This was a formality employed in cases of witchcraft, so that the devil should have no place to hide in; for it was the common belief that if a single hair were left, the devil could render the accused insensible to the pains of torture. From this Urbain understood that the verdict had gone against him and that he was condemned to death.

Fourneau having saluted Grandier, proceeded to carry out his orders, whereupon a judge said it was not sufficient to shave the body of the prisoner, but that his nails must also be torn out, lest the devil should hide beneath them. Grandier looked at the speaker with an expression of unutterable pity,

and held out his hands to Fourneau; but Fourneau put them gently aside, and said he would do nothing of the kind, even were the order given by the cardinal-duke himself, and at the same time begged Grandier's pardon for shaving him. At these words Grandier, who had for so long met with nothing but barbarous treatment from those with whom he came in contact, turned towards the surgeon with tears in his eyes, saying—

"So you are the only one who has any pity for me."

"Ah, sir," replied Fourneau, "you don't see everybody."

Grandier was then shaved, but only two marks found on him, one as we have said on the shoulder-blade, and the other on the thigh. Both marks were very sensitive, the wounds which Mannouri had made not having yet healed. This point having been certified by Fourneau, Grandier was handed, not his own clothes, but some wretched garments which had probably belonged to some other condemned man.

Then, although his sentence had been pronounced at the Carmelite convent, he was taken by the grand provost's officer, with two of his archers, accompanied by the provosts of Loudun and Chinon, to the town hall, where several ladies of quality, among them Madame de Laubardemont, led by curiosity, were sitting beside the judges, waiting to hear the sentence read. M. de Laubardement was in the seat usually occupied by the clerk, and the clerk was standing before him. All the approaches were lined with soldiers.

Before the accused was brought in, Père Lactance and another Franciscan who had come with him exorcised him to oblige the devils to leave him; then entering the judgment hall, they exorcised the earth, the air, "and the other elements." Not till that was done was Grandier led in.

At first he was kept at the far end of the hall, to allow time for the exorcisms to have their full effect, then he was brought forward to the bar and ordered to kneel down. Grandier obeyed, but could remove neither his hat nor his skull-cap, as his hands were bound behind his back, whereupon the clerk seized on the one and the provost's officer on the other, and flung them at de Laubardemont's feet. Seeing that the accused

fixed his eyes on the commissioner as if waiting to see what he was about to do, the clerk said—

"Turn your head, unhappy man, and adore the crucifix above the bench."

Grandier obeyed without a murmur and with great humility, and remained sunk in silent prayer for about ten minutes; he then resumed his former attitude.

The clerk then began to read the sentence in a trembling voice, while Grandier listened with unshaken firmness and wonderful tranquillity, although it was the most terrible sentence that could be passed, condemning the accused to be burnt alive the same day, after the infliction of ordinary and extraordinary torture. When the clerk had ended, Grandier said, with a voice unmoved from its usual calm—

"Messeigneurs, I aver in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the Blessed Virgin, my only hope, that I have never been a magician, that I have never committed sacrilege, that I know no other magic than that of the Holy Scriptures, which I have always preached, and that I have never held any other belief than that of our Holy Mother the Catholic Apostolic Church of Rome; I renounce the devil and all his works; I confess my Redeemer, and I pray to be saved through the blood of the Cross; and I beseech you, messeigneurs, to mitigate the rigour of my sentence, and not to drive my soul to despair."

The concluding words led de Laubardemont to believe that he could obtain some admission from Grandier through fear of suffering, so he ordered the court to be cleared, and, being left alone with maître Houmain, criminal lieutenant of Orleans, and the Franciscans, he addressed Grandier in a stern voice, saying there was only one way to obtain any mitigation of his sentence, and that was to confess the names of his accomplices and to sign the confession. Grandier replied that having committed no crime he could have no accomplices, whereupon Laubardemont ordered the prisoner to be taken to the torture chamber, which adjoined the judgment hall—an order which was instantly obeyed.

CHAPTER XI

THE mode of torture employed at Loudun was a variety of the boot, and one of the most painful of all. Each of the victim's legs below the knee was placed between two boards, the two pairs were then laid one above the other and bound together firmly at the ends; wedges were then driven in with a mallet between the two middle boards; four such wedges constituted ordinary and eight extraordinary torture; and this latter was seldom inflicted, except on those condemned to death, as almost no one ever survived it, the sufferer's legs being crushed to a pulp before he left the torturer's hands. In this case M. de Laubardemont on his own initiative, for it had never been done before, added two wedges to those of the extraordinary torture, so that instead of eight, ten were to be driven in.

Nor was this all: the commissioner royal and the two Franciscans undertook to inflict the torture themselves.

Laubardemont ordered Grandier to be bound in the usual manner, and then saw his legs placed between the boards. He then dismissed the executioner and his assistants, and directed the keeper of the instruments to bring the wedges, which he complained of as being too small. Unluckily, there were no larger ones in stock, and in spite of threats the keeper persisted in saying he did not know where to procure others. M. de Laubardemont then asked how long it would take to make some, and was told two hours; finding that too long to wait, he was obliged to put up with those he had.

Thereupon the torture began. Père Lactance having exorcised the instruments, drove in the first wedge, but could not draw a murmur from Laubardemont, who was reciting a prayer in a

low voice; a second was driven home, and this time the victim, despite his resolution, could not avoid interrupting his devotions by two groans, at each of which Père Lactance struck harder, crying, "*Dicas! dicas!*" (Confess, confess!), a word which he repeated so often and so furiously, till all was over, that he was ever after popularly called "Père Dicas."

When the second wedge was in, de Laubardemont showed Grandier his manuscript against the celibacy of the priests, and asked if he acknowledged it to be in his own handwriting. Grandier answered in the affirmative. Asked what motive he had in writing it, he said it was an attempt to restore peace of mind to a poor girl whom he had loved, as was proved by the two lines written at the end—

> "Si ton gentil esprit prend bien cette science,
> Tu mettras en repos ta bonne conscience."[1]

Upon this, M. de Laubardemont demanded the girl's name; but Grandier assured him it should never pass his lips, none knowing it but himself and God. Thereupon M. de Laubardemont ordered Père Lactance to insert the third wedge. While it was being driven in by the monk's lusty arm, each blow being accompanied by the word "*Dicas!*" Grandier exclaimed—

"My God! they are killing me, and yet I am neither a sorcerer nor sacrilegious!"

At the fourth wedge Grandier fainted, muttering—

"Oh, Père Lactance, is this charity?"

Although his victim was unconscious, Père Lactance continued to strike; so that, having lost consciousness through pain, pain soon brought him back to life.

De Laubardemont took advantage of this revival to take his turn at demanding a confession of his crimes; but Grandier said—

"I have committed no crimes, sir, only errors. Being a man, I have often gone astray; but I have confessed and done penance, and believe that my prayers for pardon have been

[1] "If thy sensitive mind imbibe this teaching,
It will give ease to thy tender conscience."

heard; but if not, I trust that God will grant me pardon now, for the sake of my sufferings."

At the fifth wedge Grandier fainted once more, but they restored him to consciousness by dashing cold water in his face, whereupon he moaned, turning to M. de Laubardemont—

"In pity, sir, put me to death at once! I am only a man, and I cannot answer for myself that if you continue to torture me so I shall not give way to despair."

"Then sign this, and the torture shall cease," answered the commissioner royal, offering him a paper.

"My father," said Urbain, turning towards the Franciscan, "can you assure me on your conscience that it is permissible for a man, in order to escape suffering, to confess a crime he has never committed?"

"No," replied the monk; "for if he die with a lie on his lips he dies in mortal sin."

"Go on, then," said Grandier; "for having suffered so much in my body, I desire to save my soul."

As Père Lactance drove in the sixth wedge Grandier fainted anew.

When he had been revived, Laubardemont called upon him to confess that a certain Elisabeth Blanchard had been his mistress, as well as the girl for whom he had written the treatise against celibacy; but Grandier replied that not only had no improper relations ever existed between them, but that the day he had been confronted with her at his trial was the first time he had ever seen her.

At the seventh wedge Grandier's legs burst open, and the blood spurted into Père Lactance's face; but he wiped it away with the sleeve of his gown.

"O Lord my God, have mercy on me! I die!" cried Grandier, and fainted for the fourth time. Père Lactance seized the opportunity to take a short rest, and sat down.

When Grandier had once more come to himself, he began slowly to utter a prayer, so beautiful and so moving that the provost's lieutenant wrote it down; but de Laubardemont noticing this, forbade him ever to show it to anyone.

At the eighth wedge the bones gave way, and the marrow oozed out of the wounds, and it became useless to drive in any more wedges, the legs being now as flat as the boards that compressed them, and moreover Père Lactance was quite worn out.

Grandier was unbound and laid upon the flagged floor, and while his eyes shone with fever and agony he prayed again a second prayer—a veritable martyr's prayer, overflowing with faith and enthusiasm; but as he ended his strength failed, and he again became unconscious. The provost's lieutenant forced a little wine between his lips, which brought him to; then he made an act of contrition, renounced Satan and all his works once again, and commended his soul to God.

Four men entered, his legs were freed from the boards, and the crushed parts were found to be a mere inert mass, only attached to the knees by the sinews. He was then carried to the council chamber, and laid on a little straw before the fire.

In a corner of the fireplace an Augustinian monk was seated. Urbain asked leave to confess to him, which de Laubardemont refused, holding out the paper he desired to have signed once more, at which Grandier said—

"If I would not sign to spare myself before, am I likely to give way now that only death remains?"

"True," replied Laubardemont; "but the mode of your death is in our hands: it rests with us to make it slow or quick, painless or agonising; so take this paper and sign."

Grandier pushed the paper gently away, shaking his head in sign of refusal, whereupon de Laubardemont left the room in a fury, and ordered Pères Tranquille and Claude to be admitted, they being the confessors he had chosen for Urbain. When they came near to fulfil their office, Urbain recognised in them two of his torturers, so he said that, as it was only four days since he had confessed to Père Grillau, and he did not believe he had committed any mortal sin since then, he would not trouble them, upon which they cried out at him as a heretic and infidel, but without any effect.

At four o'clock the executioner's assistants came to fetch

him; he was placed lying on a bier and carried out in that position. On the way he met the criminal lieutenant of Orleans, who once more exhorted him to confess his crimes openly; but Grandier replied—

"Alas, sir, I have avowed them all; I have kept nothing back."

"Do you desire me to have masses said for you?" continued the lieutenant.

"I not only desire it, but I beg for it as a great favour," said Urbain.

A lighted torch was then placed in his hand: as the procession started he pressed the torch to his lips; he looked on all whom he met with modest confidence, and begged those whom he knew to intercede with God for him. On the threshold of the door his sentence was read to him, and he was then placed in a small cart and driven to the church of St. Pierre in the market-place. There he was awaited by M. de Laubardemont, who ordered him to alight. As he could not stand on his mangled limbs, he was pushed out, and fell first on his knees and then on his face. In this position he remained patiently waiting to be lifted. He was carried to the top of the steps and laid down, while his sentence was read to him once more, and just as it was finished, his confessor, who had not been allowed to see him for four days, forced a way through the crowd and threw himself into Grandier's arms. At first tears choked Père Grillau's voice, but at last he said, "Remember, sir, that our Saviour Jesus Christ ascended to His Father through the agony on the Cross: you are a wise man, do not give way now and lose everything. I bring you your mother's blessing; she and I never cease to pray that God may have mercy on you and receive you into Paradise."

These words seemed to inspire Grandier with new strength; he lifted his head, which pain had bowed, and raising his eyes to heaven, murmured a short prayer. Then turning towards the worthy friar, he said—

"Be a son to my mother; pray to God for me constantly; ask all our good friars to pray for my soul; my one consolation

is that I die innocent. I trust that God in His mercy may receive me into Paradise."

"Is there nothing else I can do for you?" asked Père Grillau.

"Alas, my father!" replied Grandier, "I am condemned to die a most cruel death; ask the executioner if there is no way of shortening what I must undergo."

"I go at once," said the friar; and giving him absolution *in articulo mortis*, he went down the steps, and while Grandier was making his confession aloud the good monk drew the executioner aside and asked if there were no possibility of alleviating the death-agony by means of a shirt dipped in brimstone. The executioner answered that as the sentence expressly stated that Grandier was to be burnt alive, he could not employ an expedient so sure to be discovered as that; but that if the friar would give him thirty crowns he would undertake to strangle Grandier while he was kindling the pile. Père Grillau gave him the money, and the executioner provided himself with a rope. The Franciscan then placed himself where he could speak to his penitent as he passed, and as he embraced him for the last time, whispered to him what he had arranged with the executioner, whereupon Grandier turned towards the latter and said in a tone of deep gratitude—

"Thanks, my brother."

At that moment, the archers having driven away Père Grillau, by order of M. de Laubardemont, by beating him with their halberts, the procession resumed its march, to go through the same ceremony at the Ursuline church, and from there to proceed to the square of Sainte-Croix. On the way Urbain met and recognised Moussant, who was accompanied by his wife, and turning towards him, said—

"I die your debtor, and if I have ever said a word that could offend you I ask you to forgive me."

When the place of execution was reached, the provost's lieutenant approached Grandier and asked his forgiveness.

"You have not offended me," was the reply; "you have only done what your duty obliged you to do."

The executioner then came forward and removed the back board of the cart, and ordered his assistants to carry Grandier to where the pile was prepared. As he was unable to stand, he was attached to the stake by an iron hoop passed round his body. At that moment a flock of pigeons seemed to fall from the sky, and, fearless of the crowd, which was so great that the archers could not succeed even by blows of their weapons in clearing a way for the magistrates, began to fly around Grandier, while one, as white as the driven snow, alighted on the summit of the stake, just above his head. Those who believed in possession exclaimed that they were only a band of devils come to seek their master, but there were many who muttered that devils were not wont to assume such a form, and who persisted in believing that the doves had come in default of men to bear witness to Grandier's innocence.

In trying next day to combat this impression, a monk asserted that he had seen a huge fly buzzing round Grandier's head, and as Beelzebub meant in Hebrew, as he said, the god of flies, it was quite evident that it was that demon himself who, taking upon him the form of one of his subjects, had come to carry off the magician's soul.

When everything was prepared, the executioner passed the rope by which he meant to strangle him round Grandier's neck; then the priests exorcised the earth, air, and wood, and again demanded of their victim if he would not publicly confess his crimes. Urbain replied that he had nothing to say, but that he hoped through the martyr's death he was about to die to be that day with Christ in Paradise.

The clerk then read his sentence to him for the fourth time, and asked if he persisted in what he said under torture.

"Most certainly I do," said Urbain; "for it was the exact truth."

Upon this, the clerk withdrew, first informing Grandier that if he had anything to say to the people he was at liberty to speak.

But this was just what the exorcists did not want: they knew Grandier's eloquence and courage, and a firm, unshaken denial at the moment of death would be most prejudicial to their

interests. As soon, therefore, as Grandier opened his lips to speak, they dashed such a quantity of holy water in his face that it took away his breath. It was but for a moment, however, and as he recovered himself, and again endeavoured to speak, a monk stooped down and stifled the words by kissing him on the lips. Grandier, guessing his intention, said loud enough for those next the pile to hear, "That was the kiss of Judas!"

At these words the monks become so enraged that one of them struck Grandier three times in the face with a crucifix, while he appeared to be giving it him to kiss; but by the blood that flowed from his nose and lips at the third blow those standing near perceived the truth: all Grandier could do was to call out that he asked for a *Salve Regina* and an *Ave Maria*, which many began at once to repeat, whilst he with clasped hands and eyes raised to heaven commended himself to God and the Virgin. The exorcists then made one more effort to get him to confess publicly, but he exclaimed—

"My fathers, I have said all I had to say; I hope in God and in His mercy."

At this refusal the anger of the exorcists surpassed all bounds, and Père Lactance, taking a twist of straw, dipped it in a bucket of pitch which was standing beside the pile, and lighting it at a torch, thrust it into his face, crying—

"Miserable wretch! will nothing force you to confess your crimes and renounce the devil?"

"I do not belong to the devil," said Grandier, pushing away the straw with his hands; "I have renounced the devil, I now renounce him and all his works again, and I pray that God may have mercy on me."

At this, without waiting for the signal from the provost's lieutenant, Père Lactance poured the bucket of pitch on one corner of the pile of wood and set fire to it, upon which Grandier called the executioner to his aid, who, hastening up, tried in vain to strangle him, while the flames spread apace.

"Ah! my brother," said the sufferer, "is this the way you keep your promise?"

"It's not my fault," answered the executioner; "the monks have knotted the cord, so that the noose cannot slip."

"Oh, Father Lactance! Father Lactance! have you no charity?" cried Grandier.

The executioner by this time was forced by the increasing heat to jump down from the pile, being indeed almost overcome; and seeing this, Grandier stretched forth a hand into the flames, and said—

"Père Lactance, God in heaven will judge between thee and me; I summon thee to appear before Him in thirty days."

Grandier was then seen to make attempts to strangle himself, but either because it was impossible, or because he felt it would be wrong to end his life by his own hands, he desisted, and clasping his hands, prayed aloud—

"*Deus meus, ad te vigilo, miserere mĕi.*"

A Capuchin fearing that he would have time to say more, approached the pile from the side which had not yet caught fire, and dashed the remainder of the holy water in his face. This caused such smoke that Grandier was hidden for a moment from the eyes of the spectators; when it cleared away, it was seen that his clothes were now alight; his voice could still be heard from the midst of the flames raised in prayer; then three times, each time in a weaker voice, he pronounced the name of Jesus, and giving one cry, his head fell forward on his breast.

At that moment the pigeons which had till then never ceased to circle round the stake, flew away, and were lost in the clouds.

Urbain Grandier had given up the ghost.

CHAPTER XII

THIS time it was not the man who was executed who was guilty, but the executioners; consequently we feel sure that our readers will be anxious to learn something of their fate.

Père Lactance died in the most terrible agony on September 18th, 1634, exactly a month from the date of Grandier's death. His brother-monks considered that this was due to the vengeance of Satan; but others were not wanting who said, remembering the summons uttered by Grandier, that it was rather due to the justice of God. Several attendant circumstances seemed to favour the latter opinion. The author of the *History of the Devils of Loudun* gives an account of one of these circumstances, for the authenticity of which he vouches, and from which we extract the following:—

"Some days after the execution of Grandier, Père Lactance fell ill of the disease of which he died. Feeling that it was of supernatural origin, he determined to take a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame des Andilliers de Saumur, where many miracles were wrought, and which was held in high estimation in the neighbourhood. A place in the carriage of the Sieur de Canaye was offered him for the journey; for this gentleman, accompanied by a large party on pleasure bent, was just then setting out for his estate of Grand Fonds, which lay in the same direction. The reason for the offer was that Canaye and his friends, having heard that the last words of Grandier had affected Père Lactance's mind, expected to find a great deal of amusement in exciting the terrors of their travelling-companion. And in truth, for a day or two, the boon companions sharpened their wits at the expense

of the worthy monk, when all at once, on a good road and without apparent cause, the carriage overturned. Though no one was hurt, the accident appeared so strange to the pleasure-seekers that it put an end to the jokes of even the boldest among them. Père Lactance himself appeared melancholy and preoccupied, and that evening at supper refused to eat, repeating over and over again—

"'It was wrong of me to deny Grandier the confessor he asked for; God is punishing me, God is punishing me!'

"On the following morning the journey was resumed, but the evident distress of mind under which Père Lactance laboured had so damped the spirits of the party that all their gaiety had disappeared. Suddenly, just outside Fenet, where the road was in excellent condition and no obstacle to their progress apparent, the carriage upset for the second time. Although again no one was hurt, the travellers felt that there was among them someone against whom God's anger was turned, and their suspicions pointing to Père Lactance, they went on their way, leaving him behind, and feeling very uncomfortable at the thought that they had spent two or three days in his society.

"Lactance at last reached Notre-Dame des Andilliers; but however numerous were the miracles there performed, the remission of the doom pronounced by the martyr on Père Lactance was not added to their number; and at a quarter-past six on September 18th, exactly a month to the very minute after Grandier's death, Père Lactance expired in excruciating agony."

Père Tranquille's turn came four years later. The malady which attacked him was so extraordinary that the physicians were quite at a loss, and forced to declare their ignorance of any remedy. His shrieks and blasphemies were so distinctly heard in the streets, that his brother Franciscans, fearing the effect they would have on his after-reputation, especially in the minds of those who had seen Grandier die with words of prayer on his lips, spread abroad the report that the devils

whom he had expelled from the bodies of the nuns had entered into the body of the exorcist. He died shrieking—

"My God! how I suffer! Not all the devils and all the damned together endure what I endure!"

His panegyrist, in whose book we find all the horrible details of his death employed to much purpose to illustrate the advantages of belonging to the true faith, remarks—

"Truly his generous heart must have been a hot hell for those fiends who entered his body to torment it."

The following epitaph which was placed over his grave was interpreted, according to the prepossessions of those who read it, either as a testimony to his sanctity or as a proof of his punishment:—

"Here lies Père Tranquille, of Saint-Remi; a humble Capuchin preacher. The demons no longer able to endure his fearlessly exercised power as an exorcist, and encouraged by sorcerers, tortured him to death, on May 31st, 1638."

But a death about which there could be no doubt as to the cause was that of the surgeon Mannouri, the same who had, as the reader may recollect, been the first to torture Grandier. One evening about ten o'clock he was returning from a visit to a patient who lived on the outskirts of the town, accompanied by a colleague and preceded by his surgery attendant carrying a lantern. When they reached the centre of the town in the rue Grand-Pavé, which passes between the walls of the castle grounds and the gardens of the Franciscan monastery, Mannouri suddenly stopped, and, staring fixedly at some object which was invisible to his companions, exclaimed with a start—

"Oh! there is Grandier!"

"Where? where?" cried the others.

He pointed in the direction towards which his eyes were turned, and beginning to tremble violently, asked—

"What do you want with me, Grandier? What do you want?"

A moment later he added—

"Yes—yes, I am coming."

Immediately it seemed as if the vision vanished from before his eyes, but the effect remained. His brother-surgeon and the servant brought him home, but neither candles nor the light of day could allay his fears; his disordered brain showed him Grandier ever standing at the foot of his bed. A whole week he continued, as was known all over the town, in this condition of abject terror; then the spectre seemed to move from its place and gradually to draw nearer, for he kept on repeating, "He is coming! he is coming!" and at length, towards evening, at about the same hour at which Grandier expired, Surgeon Mannouri drew his last breath.

We have still to tell of M. de Laubardemont. All we know is thus related in the letters of M. de Patin:—

"On the 9th inst., at nine o'clock in the evening, a carriage was attacked by robbers; on hearing the noise the townspeople ran to the spot, drawn thither as much by curiosity as by humanity. A few shots were exchanged and the robbers put to flight, with the exception of one man belonging to their band who was taken prisoner, and another who lay wounded on the paving-stones. This latter died next day without having spoken, and left no clue behind as to who he was. His identity was, however, at length made clear. He was the son of a high dignitary named de Laubardemont, who in 1634, as royal commissioner, condemned Urbain Grandier, a poor priest of Loudun, to be burnt alive, under the pretence that he had caused several nuns of Loudun to be possessed by devils. These nuns he had so tutored as to their behaviour that many people foolishly believed them to be demoniacs. May we not regard the fate of his son as a chastisement inflicted by Heaven on this unjust judge—an expiation exacted for the pitilessly cruel death inflicted on his victim, whose blood still cries unto the Lord from the ground?"

Naturally, the persecution of Urbain Grandier attracted the attention not only of journalists but of poets. Among the

many poems which were inspired by it, the following is one of the best. Urbain speaks :—

"From hell came the tidings that by horrible sanctions
I had made a pact with the devil to have power over women:
Though not one could be found to accuse me.
In the trial which delivered me to torture and the stake,
The demon who accused me invented and suggested the crime,
And his testimony was the only proof against me.

The English in their rage burnt the Maid alive;
Like her, I too fell a victim to revenge;
We were both accused falsely of the same crime;
In Paris she is adored, in London abhorred;
In Loudun some hold me guilty of witchcraft,
Some believe me innocent; some halt between two minds.

Like Hercules, I loved passionately;
Like him, I was consumed by fire;
But he by death became a god.
The injustice of my death was so well concealed
That no one can judge whether the flames saved or destroyed me;
Whether they blackened me for hell, or purified me for heaven.

In vain did I suffer torments with unshaken resolution;
They said that I felt no pain, being a sorcerer, and died unrepentant;
That the prayers I uttered were impious words;
That in kissing the image on the cross I spat in its face;
That casting my eyes to heaven I mocked the saints;
That when I seemed to call on God, I invoked the devil.

Others, more charitable, say, in spite of their hatred of my crime,
That my death may be admired although my life was not blameless;
That my resignation showed that I died in hope and faith;
That to forgive, to suffer without complaint or murmur,
Is perfect love; and that the soul is purified
From the sins of life by a death like mine."

DERUES

DERUES

ONE September afternoon in 1751, towards half-past five, about a score of small boys, chattering, pushing, and tumbling over one another like a covey of partridges, issued from one of the religious schools of Chartres. The joy of the little troop just escaped from a long and wearisome captivity was doubly great: a slight accident to one of the teachers had caused the class to be dismissed half an hour earlier than usual, and in consequence of the extra work thrown on the teaching staff the brother whose duty it was to see all the scholars safe home was compelled to omit that part of his daily task. Therefore not only thirty or forty minutes were stolen from work, but there was also unexpected, uncontrolled liberty, free from the surveillance of that black-cassocked overseer who kept order in their ranks. Thirty minutes! at that age it is a century, of laughter and prospective games! Each had promised solemnly, under pain of severe punishment, to return straight to his paternal nest without delay, but the air was so fresh and pure, the country smiled all around! The school, or preferably the cage, which had just opened, lay at the extreme edge of one of the suburbs, and it only required a few steps to slip under a cluster of trees by a sparkling brook beyond which rose undulating ground, breaking the monotony of a vast and fertile plain. Was it possible to be obedient, to refrain from the desire to spread one's wings? The scent of the meadows mounted to the heads of the steadiest among them, and intoxicated even the most timid. It was resolved to betray the confidence of the reverend fathers, even at the risk of disgrace and punishment next morning, supposing the escapade were discovered.

A flock of sparrows suddenly released from a cage could not have flown more wildly into the little wood. They were all about the same age, the eldest might be nine. They flung off coats and waistcoats, and the grass became strewn with baskets, copy-books, dictionaries, and catechisms. While the crowd of fair-haired heads, of fresh and smiling faces, noisily consulted as to which game should be chosen, a boy who had taken no part in the general gaiety, and who had been carried away by the rush without being able to escape sooner, glided slyly away among the trees, and, thinking himself unseen, was beating a hasty retreat, when one of his comrades cried out—

"Antoine is running away!"

Two of the best runners immediately started in pursuit, and the fugitive, notwithstanding his start, was speedily overtaken, seized by his collar, and brought back as a deserter.

"Where were you going?" the others demanded.

"Home to my cousins," replied the boy; "there is no harm in that."

"You canting sneak!" said another boy, putting his fist under the captive's chin; "you were going to the master to tell of us."

"Pierre," responded Antoine, "you know quite well I never tell lies."

"Indeed!—only this morning you pretended I had taken a book you had lost, and you did it because I kicked you yesterday and you didn't dare to kick me back again."

Antoine lifted his eyes to heaven, and folding his arms on his breast—

"Dear Buttel," he said, "you are mistaken; I have always been taught to forgive injuries."

"Listen, listen! he might be saying his prayers!" cried the other boys; and a volley of offensive epithets, enforced by cuffs, was hurled at the culprit.

Pierre Buttel, whose influence was great, put a stop to this onslaught.

"Look here, Antoine, you are a bad lot, that we all know; you are a sneak and a hypocrite. It's time we put a stop

to it. Take off your coat and fight it out. If you like, we will fight every morning and evening till the end of the month."

The proposition was loudly applauded, and Pierre, turning up his sleeves as far as his elbows, prepared to suit actions to words.

The challenger assuredly did not realise the full meaning of his words; had he done so, this chivalrous defiance would simply have been an act of cowardice on his part, for there could be no doubt as to the victor in such a conflict. The one was a boy of alert and gallant bearing, strong upon his legs, supple and muscular, a vigorous man in embryo; while the other, not quite so old, small, thin, of a sickly leaden complexion, seemed as if he might be blown away by a strong puff of wind. His skinny arms and legs hung on to his body like the claws of a spider, his fair hair inclined to red, his white skin appeared nearly bloodless, and the consciousness of weakness made him timid, and gave a shifty, uneasy look to his eyes. His whole expression was uncertain, and looking only at his face it was difficult at first sight to decide to which sex he belonged. This confusion of two natures, this indefinable mixture of feminine weakness without grace, and of abortive boyhood, seemed to stamp him as something exceptional, unclassable, and once observed, it was difficult to take one's eyes from him. Had he been endowed with physical strength he would have been a terror to his comrades, exercising by fear the ascendancy which Pierre owed to his joyous temper and unwearied gaiety, for this mean exterior concealed extraordinary powers of will and dissimulation. Guided by instinct, the other children hung about Pierre and willingly accepted his leadership; by instinct also they avoided Antoine, repelled by a feeling of chill, as if from the neighbourhood of a reptile, and shunning him unless to profit in some way by their superior strength. Never would he join their games without compulsion; his thin, colourless lips seldom parted for a laugh, and even at that tender age his smile had an unpleasantly sinister expression.

"Will you fight?" again demanded Pierre.

Antoine glanced hastily round; there was no chance of escape, a double ring enclosed him. To accept or refuse seemed about equally risky; he ran a good chance of a thrashing whichever way he decided. Although his heart beat loudly, no trace of emotion appeared on his pallid cheek; an unforeseen danger would have made him shriek, but he had had time to collect himself, time to shelter behind hypocrisy. As soon as he could lie and cheat he recovered courage, and the instinct of cunning, once roused, prevailed over everything else. Instead of answering this second challenge, he knelt down and said to Pierre—

"You are much stronger than I am."

This submission disarmed his antagonist. "Get up," he replied; "I won't touch you, if you can't defend yourself."

"Pierre," continued Antoine, still on his knees, "I assure you, by God and the Holy Virgin, I was not going to tell. I was going home to my cousins to learn my lessons for to-morrow, you know how slow I am. If you think I have done you any harm, I ask your forgiveness."

Pierre held out his hand and made him get up.

"Will you be a good fellow, Antoine, and play with us?"

"Yes, I will."

"All right, then; let us forget all about it."

"What are we to play at?" asked Antoine, taking off his coat.

"Thieves and archers," cried one of the boys.

"Splendid!" said Pierre; and using his acknowledged authority, he divided them into two sides—ten highwaymen, whom he was to command, and ten archers of the guard, who were to pursue them; Antoine was among the latter.

The highwaymen, armed with swords and guns obtained from the willows which grew along the brook, moved off first, and gained the valleys between the little hills beyond the wood. The fight was to be serious, and any prisoner on either side was to be tried immediately. The robbers divided into twos and threes, and hid themselves in the ravines.

A few minutes later the archers started in pursuit. There

were encounters, surprises, skirmishes; but whenever it came to close quarters, Pierre's men, skilfully distributed, united on hearing his whistle, and the Army of Justice had to retreat. But there came a time when this magic signal was no longer heard, and the robbers became uneasy, and remained crouching in their hiding-places. Pierre, over-daring, had undertaken to defend alone the entrance of a dangerous passage and to stop the whole hostile troop there. Whilst he kept them engaged, half of his men, concealed on the left, were to come round the foot of the hill and make a rush on hearing his whistle; the other half, also stationed at some little distance, were to execute the same manœuvre from above. The archers would be caught in a trap, and attacked both in front and rear, would be obliged to surrender at discretion. Chance, which not unfrequently decides the fate of a battle, defeated this excellent stratagem. Watching intently, Pierre failed to perceive that while his whole attention was given to the ground in front, the archers had taken an entirely different road from the one they ought to have followed if his combination were to succeed. They suddenly fell upon him from behind, and before he could blow his whistle, they gagged him with a handkerchief and tied his hands. Six remained to keep the field of battle and disperse the hostile band, now deprived of its chief; the remaining four conveyed Pierre to the little wood, while the robbers, hearing no signal, did not venture to stir. According to agreement, Pierre Buttel was tried by the archers, who promptly transformed themselves into a court of justice, and as he had been taken red-handed, and did not condescend to defend himself, the trial was not a long affair. He was unanimously sentenced to be hung, and the execution was then and there carried out, at the request of the criminal himself, who wanted the game to be properly played to the end, and who actually selected a suitable tree for his own execution.

"But, Pierre," said one of the judges, "how can you be held up there?"

"How stupid you are!" returned the captive. "I shall only pretend to be hung, of course. See here!" and he fastened

together several pieces of strong string which had tied some of the other boys' books, piled the latter together, and standing on tiptoe on this very insecure basis, fastened one end of the cord to a horizontal bough, and put his neck into a running knot at the other end, endeavouring to imitate the contortions of an actual sufferer. Shouts of laughter greeted him, and the victim laughed loudest of all. Three archers went to call the rest to behold this amusing spectacle; one, tired out, remained with the prisoner.

"Ah, hangman," said Pierre, putting out his tongue at him, "are the books firm? I thought I felt them give way."

"No," replied Antoine; it was he who remained. "Don't be afraid, Pierre."

"It is a good thing; for if they fell I don't think the cord is long enough."

"Don't you really think so?"

A horrible thought showed itself like a flash on the child's face. He resembled a young hyena scenting blood for the first time. He glanced at the pile of books Pierre was standing on, and compared it with the length of the cord between the branch and his neck. It was already nearly dark, the shadows were deepening in the wood, gleams of pale light penetrated between the trees, the leaves had become black and rustled in the wind. Antoine stood silent and motionless, listening if any sound could be heard near them.

It would be a curious study for the moralist to observe how the first thought of crime develops itself in the recesses of the human heart, and how this poisoned germ grows and stifles all other sentiments; an impressive lesson might be gathered from this struggle of two opposing principles, however weak it may be, in perverted natures. In cases where judgment can discern, where there is power to choose between good and evil, the guilty person has only himself to blame, and the most heinous crime is only the action of its perpetrator. It is a human action, the result of passions which might have been controlled, and one's mind is not uncertain, nor one's conscience doubtful, as to the guilt. But how can one conceive this taste for

murder in a young child, how imagine it, without being tempted to exchange the idea of eternal sovereign justice for that of blind fatality? How can one judge without hesitation between the moral sense which has given way and the instinct which displays itself? how not exclaim that the designs of a Creator who retains the one and impels the other are sometimes mysterious and inexplicable, and that one must submit without understanding?

"Do you hear them coming?" asked Pierre.

"I hear nothing," replied Antoine, and a nervous shiver ran through all his members.

"So much the worse. I am tired of being dead; I shall come to life and run after them. Hold the books, and I will undo the noose."

"If you move, the books will separate; wait, I will hold them."

And he knelt down, and collecting all his strength, gave the pile a violent push.

Pierre endeavoured to raise his hands to his throat. "What are you doing?" he cried in a suffocating voice.

"I am paying you out," replied Antoine, folding his arms.

Pierre's feet were only a few inches from the ground, and the weight of his body at first bent the bough for a moment; but it rose again, and the unfortunate boy exhausted himself in useless efforts. At every movement the knot grew tighter, his legs struggled, his arms sought vainly something to lay hold of; then his movements slackened, his limbs stiffened, and his hands sank down. Of so much life and vigour nothing remained but the movement of an inert mass turning round and round upon itself.

Not till then did Antoine cry for help, and when the other boys hastened up they found him crying and tearing his hair. So violent indeed were his sobs and his despair that he could hardly be understood as he tried to explain how the books had given way under Pierre, and how he had vainly endeavoured to support him in his arms.

This boy, left an orphan at three years old, had been

brought up at first by a relation who turned him out for theft; afterwards by two sisters, his cousins, who were already beginning to take alarm at his abnormal perversity. This pale and fragile being, an incorrigible thief, a consummate hypocrite, and a cold-blooded assassin, was predestined to an immortality of crime, and was to find a place among the most execrable monsters for whom humanity has ever had to blush; his name was Antoine-François Derues.

. . . . . .

Twenty years had gone by since this horrible and mysterious event, which no one sought to unravel at the time it occurred. One June evening, 1771, four persons were sitting in one of the rooms of a modestly furnished dwelling on the third floor of a house in the rue Saint-Victor. The party consisted of three women and an ecclesiastic, who boarded, for meals only, with the woman who tenanted the dwelling, the other two were near neighbours. They were all friends, and often met thus in the evening to play cards. They were sitting round the card-table, but although it was nearly ten o'clock the cards had not yet been touched. They spoke in low tones, and a half-interrupted confidence had, this evening, put a check on the usual gaiety.

Someone knocked gently at the door, although no sound of steps on the creaking wooden staircase had been heard, and a wheedling voice asked for admittance. The occupier of the room, Madame Legrand, rose, and admitted a man of about six-and-twenty, at whose appearance the four friends exchanged glances, at once observed by the new-comer, who affected, however, not to see them. He bowed successively to the three women, and several times with the utmost respect to the abbé, making signs of apology for the interruption caused by his appearance; then, coughing several times, he turned to Madame Legrand, and said in a feeble voice, which seemed to betoken much suffering—

"My kind mistress, will you and these other ladies excuse my presenting myself at such an hour and in such a costume? I am ill, and I was obliged to get up."

His costume was certainly singular enough: he was wrapped in a large dressing-gown of flowered chintz; his head was adorned by a nightcap drawn up at the top and surmounted by a muslin frill. His appearance did not contradict his complaint of illness; he was barely four feet six in height, his limbs were bony, his face sharp, thin, and pale. Thus attired, coughing incessantly, dragging his feet as if he had no strength to lift them, holding a lighted candle in one hand and an egg in the other, he suggested a caricature—some imaginary invalid just escaped from M. Purgon. Nevertheless, no one ventured to smile, notwithstanding his valetudinarian appearance and his air of affected humility. The perpetual blinking of the yellow eyelids which fell over the round and hollow eyes, shining with a sombre fire which he could never entirely suppress, reminded one of a bird of prey unable to face the light, and the lines of his face, the hooked nose, and the thin, constantly quivering, drawn-in lips suggested a mixture of boldness and baseness, of cunning and sincerity. But there is no book which can instruct one to read the human countenance correctly; and some special circumstance must have roused the suspicions of these four persons so much as to cause them to make these observations, and they were not as usual deceived by the humbug of this skilled actor, a past master in the art of deception.

He continued after a moment's silence, as if he did not wish to interrupt their mute observation—

"Will you oblige me by a neighbourly kindness?"

"What is it, Derues?" asked Madame Legrand.

A violent cough, which appeared to rend his chest, prevented him from answering immediately. When it ceased, he looked at the abbé, and said, with a melancholy smile—

"What I ought to ask in my present state of health is your blessing, my father, and your intercession for the pardon of my sins. But everyone clings to the life which God has given him. We do not easily abandon hope; moreover, I have always considered it wrong to neglect such means of preserving our lives as are in our power, since life is for us only a

time of trial, and the longer and harder the trial the greater our recompense in a better world. Whatever befalls us, our answer should be that of the Virgin Mary to the angel who announced the mystery of the Incarnation: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.'"

"You are right," said the abbé, with a severe and inquisitorial look, under which Derues remained quite untroubled; "it is an attribute of God to reward and to punish, and the Almighty is not deceived by him who deceives men. The Psalmist has said, 'Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments.'"

"He has said also, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,'" Derues promptly replied. This exchange of quotations from Scripture might have lasted for hours without his being at a loss, had the abbé thought fit to continue in this strain; but such a style of conversation, garnished with grave and solemn words, seemed almost sacrilegious in the mouth of a man of such ridiculous appearance—a profanation at once sad and grotesque. Derues seemed to comprehend the impression it produced, and turning again to Madame Legrand, he said—

"We have got a long way from what I came to ask you, my kind friend. I was so ill that I went early to bed, but I cannot sleep, and I have no fire. Would you have the kindness to have this egg mulled for me?"

"Cannot your servant do that for you?" asked Madame Legrand.

"I gave her leave to go out this evening, and though it is late she has not yet returned. If I had a fire, I would not give you so much trouble, but I do not care to light one at this hour. You know I am always afraid of accidents, and they so easily happen!"

"Very well, then," replied Madame Legrand; "go back to your room, and my servant will bring it to you."

"Thank you," said Derues, bowing,—"many thanks."

As he turned to depart, Madame Legrand spoke again.

"This day week, Derues, you have to pay me half the twelve hundred livres due for the purchase of my business."

"So soon as that?"

"Certainly, and I want the money. Have you forgotten the date, then?"

"Oh dear, I have never looked at the agreement since it was drawn up. I did not think the time was so near, it is the fault of my bad memory; but I will contrive to pay you, although trade is very bad, and in three days I shall have to pay more than fifteen thousand livres to different people."

He bowed again and departed, apparently exhausted by the effort of sustaining so long a conversation.

As soon as they were alone, the abbé exclaimed—

"That man is assuredly an utter rascal! May God forgive him his hypocrisy! How is it possible we could allow him to deceive us for so long?"

"But, my father," interposed one of the visitors, "are you really sure of what you have just said?"

"I am not now speaking of the seventy-nine louis d'or which have been stolen from me, although I never mentioned to anyone but you, and he was then present, that I possessed such a sum, and although that very day he made a false excuse for coming to my rooms when I was out. Theft is indeed infamous, but slander is not less so, and he has slandered you disgracefully. Yes, he has spread a report that you, Madame Legrand, you his former mistress and benefactress, have put temptation in his way, and desired to commit carnal sin with him. This is now whispered in the neighbourhood all round us, it will soon be said aloud, and we have been so completely his dupes, we have helped him so much to acquire a reputation for uprightness, that it would now be impossible to destroy our own work; if I were to accuse him of theft, and you charged him with lying, probably neither of us would be believed. Beware, these odious tales have not been spread without a reason. Now that your eyes are open, beware of him."

"Yes," replied Madame Legrand, "my brother-in-law warned me three years ago. One day Derues said to my sister-in-law,

—I remember the words perfectly,—'I should like to be a druggist, because one would always be able to punish an enemy; and if one has a quarrel with anyone it would be easy to get rid of him by means of a poisoned draught.' I neglected these warnings. I surmounted the feeling of repugnance I first felt at the sight of him; I have responded to his advances, and I greatly fear I may have cause to repent it. But you know him as well as I do, who would not have thought his piety sincere?—who would not still think so? And notwithstanding all you have said, I still hesitate to feel serious alarm; I am unwilling to believe in such utter depravity."

The conversation continued in this strain for some time, and then, as it was getting late, the party separated.

Next morning early, a large and noisy crowd was assembled in the rue Saint-Victor before Derues' shop of drugs and groceries. There was a confusion of cross questions, of inquiries which obtained no answer, of answers not addressed to the inqury, a medley of sound, a pell-mell of unconnected words, of affirmations, contradictions, and interrupted narrations. Here, a group listened to an orator who held forth in his shirt sleeves, a little farther there were disputes, quarrels, exclamations of "Poor man!" "Such a good fellow!" "My poor gossip Derues!" "Good heavens! what will he do now?" "Alas! he is quite done for; it is to be hoped his creditors will give him time!" Above all this uproar was heard a voice, sharp and piercing like a cat's, lamenting, and relating with sobs the terrible misfortune of last night. At about three in the morning the inhabitants of the rue St. Victor had been startled out of their sleep by the cry of "Fire, fire!" A conflagration had burst forth in Derues' cellar, and though its progress had been arrested and the house saved from destruction, all the goods stored therein had perished. It apparently meant a considerable loss in barrels of oil, casks of brandy, boxes of soap, etc., which Derues estimated at not less than nine thousand livres. By what unlucky chance the fire had been caused he had no idea. He recounted his visit to Madame Legrand, and pale, trembling, hardly able to sustain himself, he cried—

"I shall die of grief! A poor man as ill as I am! I am lost! I am ruined!"

A harsh voice interrupted his lamentations, and drew the attention of the crowd to a woman carrying printed broadsides, and who forced a passage through the crowd up to the shop door. She unfolded one of her sheets, and cried as loudly and distinctly as her husky voice permitted—

"*Sentence pronounced by the Parliament of Paris against John Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of Fraudulent Bankruptcy!*"

Derues looked up and saw a street-hawker who used to come to his shop for a drink, and with whom he had had a violent quarrel about a month previously, she having detected him in a piece of knavery, and abused him roundly in her own style, which was not lacking in energy. He had not seen her since. The crowd generally, and all the gossips of the quarter, who held Derues in great veneration, thought that the woman's cry was intended as an indirect insult, and threatened to punish her for this irreverence. But, placing one hand on her hip, and with the other warning off the most pressing by a significant gesture—

"Are you still befooled by his tricks, fools that you are? Yes, no doubt there was a fire in the cellar last night, no doubt his creditors will be geese enough to let him off paying his debts! But what you don't know is, that he didn't really lose by it at all!"

"He lost all his goods!" the crowd cried on all sides. "More than nine thousand livres! Oil and brandy, do you think those won't burn? The old witch, she drinks enough to know! If one put a candle near her she would take fire, fast enough!"

"Perhaps," replied the woman, with renewed gesticulations, "perhaps; but I don't advise any of you to try. Anyhow, this fellow here is a rogue; he has been emptying his cellar for the last three nights; there were only old empty casks in it and empty packing-cases! Oh yes! I have swallowed his daily lies like everybody else, but I know the truth by now. He got

his liquor taken away by Michael Lambourne's son, the cobbler in the rue de la Parcheminerie. How do I know? Why, because the young man came and told me!"

"I turned that woman out of my shop a month ago, for stealing," said Derues.

Notwithstanding this retaliatory accusation, the woman's bold assertion might have changed the attitude of the crowd and chilled the enthusiasm, but at that moment a stout man pressed forward, and seizing the hawker by the arm, said—

"Go, and hold your tongue, backbiting woman!"

To this man, the honour of Derues was an article of faith; he had not yet ceased to wonder at the probity of this sainted person, and to doubt it in the least was as good as suspecting his own.

"My dear friend," he said, "we all know what to think of you. I know you well. Send to me to-morrow, and you shall have what goods you want, on credit, for as long as is necessary. Now, evil tongue, what do you say to that?"

"I say that you are as great a fool as the rest. Adieu, friend Derues; go on as you have begun, and I shall be selling your 'sentence' some day"; and dispersing the crowd with a few twirls of her right arm, she passed on, crying—

"*Sentence pronounced by the Parliament of Paris against John Robert Cassel, accused and convicted of Fraudulent Bankruptcy!*"

This accusation emanated from too insignificant a quarter to have any effect on Derues' reputation. However resentful he may have been at the time, he got over it in consequence of the reiterated marks of interest shown by his neighbours and all the quarter on account of his supposed ruin, and the hawker's attack passed out of his mind, or probably she might have paid for her boldness with her life. But this drunken woman had none the less uttered a prophetic word; it was the grain of sand on which, later, he was to be shipwrecked.

"All passions," says La Bruyère,—"all passions are deceitful; they disguise themselves as much as possible from the public eye; they hide from themselves. There is no vice which has

not a counterfeit resemblance to some virtue, and which does not profit by it."

The whole life of Derues bears testimony to the truth of this observation. An avaricious poisoner, he attracted his victims by the pretence of fervent and devoted piety, and drew them into the snare where he silently destroyed them. His terrible celebrity only began in 1777, caused by the double murder of Madame de Lamotte and her son, and his name, unlike those of some other great criminals, does not at first recall a long series of crimes, but when one examines this low, crooked, and obscure life, one finds a fresh stain at every step, and perhaps no one has ever surpassed him in dissimulation, in profound hypocrisy, in indefatigable depravity. Derues was executed at thirty-two, and his whole life was steeped in vice; though happily so short, it is full of horror, and is only a tissue of criminal thoughts and deeds, a very essence of evil. He had no hesitation, no remorse, no repose, no relaxation; he seemed compelled to lie, to steal, to poison! Occasionally suspicion is aroused, the public has its doubts, and vague rumours hover round him; but he burrows under new impostures, and punishment passes by. When he falls into the hands of human justice his reputation protects him, and for a few days more the legal sword is turned aside. Hypocrisy is so completely a part of his nature, that even when there is no longer any hope, when he is irrevocably sentenced, and he knows that he can no longer deceive anyone, neither mankind nor Him whose name he profanes by this last sacrilege, he yet exclaims, "*O Christ! I shall suffer even as Thou.*" It is only by the light of his funeral pyre that the dark places of his life can be examined, that this bloody plot is unravelled, and that other victims, forgotten and lost in the shadows, arise like spectres at the foot of the scaffold, and escort the assassin to his doom.

Let us trace rapidly the history of Derues' early years, effaced and forgotten in the notoriety of his death. These few pages are not written for the glorification of crime, and if in our own days, as a result of the corruption of our manners, and of a deplorable confusion of all notions of right and wrong,

it has been sought to make him an object of public interest, we, on our part, only wish to bring him into notice, and place him momentarily on a pedestal, in order to cast him still lower, that his fall may be yet greater. What has been permitted by God may be related by man. Decaying and satiated communities need not be treated as children; they require neither diplomatic handling nor precaution, and it may be good that they should see and touch the putrescent sores which canker them. Why fear to mention that which everyone knows? Why dread to sound the abyss which can be measured by everyone? Why fear to bring into the light of day unmasked wickedness, even though it confronts the public gaze unblushingly? Extreme turpitude and extreme excellence are both in the schemes of Providence; and the poet has summed up eternal morality for all ages and nations in this sublime exclamation—

"Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum."

Besides, and we cannot insist too earnestly that our intention must not be mistaken, if we had wished to inspire any other sentiment than that of horror, we should have chosen a more imposing personage from the annals of crime. There have been deeds which required audacity, a sort of grandeur, a false heroism; there have been criminals who held in check all the regular and legitimate forces of society, and whom one regarded with a mixture of terror and pity. There is nothing of that in Derues, not even a trace of courage; nothing but a shameless cupidity, exercising itself at first in the theft of a few pence filched from the poor; nothing but the illicit gains and rascalities of a cheating shopkeeper and vile money-lender, a depraved cowardice which dared not strike openly, but slew in the dark. It is the story of an unclean reptile which drags itself underground, leaving everywhere the trail of its poisonous saliva.

Such was the man whose life we have undertaken to narrate, a man who represents a complete type of wickedness, and who corrresponds to the most hideous sketch ever devised by poet

or romance-writer. Facts without importance of their own, which would be childish if recorded of anyone else, obtain a sombre reflection from other facts which precede them, and thenceforth cannot be passed over in silence. The historian is obliged to collect and note them, as showing the logical development of this degraded being: he unites them in sequence, and counts the successive steps of the ladder mounted by the criminal.

We have seen the early exploit of this assassin by instinct; we find him, twenty years later, an incendiary and a fraudulent bankrupt. What had happened in the interval? With how much treachery and crime had he filled this space of twenty years? Let us return to his infancy.

His unconquerable taste for theft caused him to be expelled by the relations who had taken charge of him. An anecdote is told which shows his impudence and incurable perversity. One day he was caught taking some money, and was soundly whipped by his cousins. When this was over, the child, instead of showing any sorrow or asking forgiveness, ran away with a sneer, and seeing they were out of breath, exclaimed—

"You are tired, are you? Well, I am not!"

Despairing of any control over this evil disposition, the relations refused to keep him, and sent him to Chartres, where two other cousins agreed to have him, out of charity. They were simple-minded women, of great and sincere piety, who imagined that good example and religious teaching might have a happy influence on their young relation. The result was contrary to their expectation: the sole fruit of their teaching was that Derues learnt to be a cheat and a hypocrite, and to assume the mask of respectability.

Here also repeated thefts insured him sound corrections. Knowing his cousins' extreme economy, not to say avarice, he mocked them when they broke a lath over his shoulders: "There now, I am so glad; that will cost you two farthings!"

His benefactresses' patience becoming exhausted, he left their house, and was apprenticed to a tinman at Chartres. His master died, and an ironmonger of the same town took him

as shopboy, and from this he passed on to a druggist and grocer. Until now, although fifteen years old, he had shown no preference for one trade more than another, but it was now necessary he should choose some profession, and his share in the family property amounted to the modest sum of three thousand five hundred livres. His residence with this last master revealed a decided taste, but it was only another evil instinct developing itself: the poisoner had scented poison, being always surrounded with drugs which were health-giving or hurtful, according to the use made of them. Derues would probably have settled at Chartres, but repeated thefts obliged him to leave the town. The profession of druggist and grocer being one which presented most chances of fortune, and being, moreover, adapted to his tastes, his family apprenticed him to a grocer in the rue Comtesse d'Artois, paying a specified premium for him.

Derues arrived in Paris in 1760. It was a new horizon, where he was unknown; no suspicion attached to him, and he felt much at his ease. Lost in the noise and the crowd of this immense receptacle for every vice, he had time to found on hypocrisy his reputation as an honest man. When his apprenticeship expired, his master proposed to place him with his sister-in-law, who kept a similar establishment in the rue St. Victor, and who had been a widow for several years. He recommended Derues as a young man whose zeal and intelligence might be useful in her business, being ignorant of various embezzlements committed by his late apprentice, who was always clever enough to cast suspicion on others. But the negotiation nearly fell through, because, one day, Derues so far forgot his usual prudence and dissimulation as to allow himself to make the observation recorded above to his mistress. She, horrified, ordered him to be silent, and threatened to ask her husband to dismiss him. It required a double amount of hypocrisy to remove this unfavourable impression; but he spared no pains to obtain the confidence of the sister-in-law, who was much influenced in his favour. Every day he inquired what could be done for her, every evening he took a basket-

load of the goods she required from the rue Comtesse d'Artois; and it excited the pity of all beholders to see this weakly young man, panting and sweating under his heavy burden, refusing any reward, and labouring merely for the pleasure of obliging, and from natural kindness of heart! The poor widow, whose spoils he was already coveting, was completely duped. She rejected the advice of her brother-in-law, and only listened to the concert of praises sung by neighbours much edified by Derues' conduct, and touched by the interest he appeared to show her. Often he found occasion to speak of her, always with the liveliest expressions of boundless devotion. These remarks were repeated to the good woman, and seemed all the more sincere to her as they appeared to have been made quite casually, and she never suspected they were carefully calculated and thought out long before.

Derues carried dishonesty as far as possible, but he knew how to stop when suspicion was likely to be aroused, and though always planning either to deceive or to hurt, he was never taken by surprise. Like the spider which spreads the threads of her web all round her, he concealed himself in a net of falsehood which one had to traverse before arriving at his real nature. The evil destiny of this poor woman, mother of four children, caused her to engage him as her shopman in the year 1767, thereby signing the warrant for her own ruin.

Derues began life under his new mistress with a master-stroke. His exemplary piety was the talk of the whole quarter, and his first care had been to request Madame Legrand to recommend him a confessor. She sent him to the director of her late husband, Père Cartault, of the Carmelite order, who, astonished at the devotion of his penitent, never failed, if he passed the shop, to enter and congratulate Madame Legrand on the excellent acquisition she had made in securing this young man, who would certainly bring her a blessing along with him. Derues affected the greatest modesty, and blushed at these praises, and often, when he saw the good father approaching, appeared not to see him, and found something to

do elsewhere; whereby the field was left clear for his too credulous panegyrists.

But Père Cartault appeared too indulgent, and Derues feared that his sins were too easily pardoned; and he dared not find peace in an absolution which was never refused. Therefore, before the year was out, he chose a second confessor, Père Denys, a Franciscan, consulting both alternately, and confiding his conscientious scruples to them. Every penance appeared too easy, and he added to those enjoined by his directors continual mortifications of his own devising, so that even Tartufe himself would have owned his superiority.

He wore about him two shrouds, to which were fastened relics of Madame de Chantal, also a medal of St. François de Sales, and occasionally scourged himself. His mistress related that he had begged her to take a sitting at the church of St. Nicholas, in order that he might more easily attend service when he had a day out, and had brought her a small sum which he had saved, to pay half the expense. Moreover, he had slept upon straw during the whole of Lent, and took care that Madame Legrand heard of this through the servant, pretending at first to hide it as if it were something wrong. He tried to prevent the maid from going into his room, and when she found out the straw he forbade her to mention it—which naturally made her more anxious to relate her discovery. Such a piece of piety, combined with such meritorious humility, such dread of publicity, could only increase the excellent opinion which everyone already had of him.

Every day was marked by some fresh hypocrisy. One of his sisters, a novice in the convent of the Ladies of the Visitation of the Virgin, was to take the veil at Easter. Derues obtained permission to be present at the ceremony, and was to start on foot on Good Friday. When he departed, the shop happened to be full of people, and the gossips of the neighbourhood inquired where he was going. Madame Legrand desired him to have a glass of liqueur (wine he never touched) and something to eat before starting.

"Oh, madame!" he exclaimed, "do you think I could eat

on a day like this, the day on which Christ was crucified! I will take a piece of bread with me, but I shall only eat it at the inn where I intend to sleep: I mean to fast the whole way."

But this kind of thing was not sufficient. He wanted an opportunity to establish a reputation for honesty on a firm basis. Chance provided one, and he seized it immediately, although at the expense of a member of his own family.

One of his brothers, who kept a public-house at Chartres, came to see him. Derues, under pretence of showing him the sights of Paris, which he did not know, asked his mistress to allow him to take in the brother for a few days, which she granted. The last evening of his stay, Derues went up to his room, broke open the box which contained his clothes, turned over everything it contained, examined the clothes, and discovering two new cotton nightcaps, raised a cry which brought up the household. His brother just then returned, and Derues called him an infamous thief, declaring that he had stolen the money for these new articles out of the shop the evening before. His brother defended himself, protesting his innocence, and, indignant at such incomprehensible treachery, endeavoured to turn the tables by relating some of Antoine's early misdeeds. The latter, however, stopped him, by declaring on his honour that he had seen his brother the evening before go to the till, slip his hand in, and take out some money. The brother was confounded and silenced by so audacious a lie; he hesitated, stammered, and was turned out of the house. Derues worthily crowned this piece of iniquity by obliging his mistress to accept the restitution of the stolen money. It cost him three livres, twelve sous, but the interest it brought him was the power of stealing unsuspected. That evening he spent in prayer for the pardon of his brother's supposed guilt.

All these schemes had succeeded, and brought him nearer to the desired goal, for not a soul in the quarter ventured to doubt the word of this saintly individual. His fawning manners and insinuating language varied according to the people addressed. He adapted himself to all, contradicting no one, and,

while austere himself, he flattered the tastes of others. In the various houses where he visited his conversation was serious, grave, and sententious; and, as we have seen, he could quote Scripture with the readiness of a theologian. In the shop, when he had to deal with the lower classes, he showed himself acquainted with their modes of expression, and spoke the Billingsgate of the market-women, which he had acquired in the rue Comtesse d'Artois, treating them familiarly, and they generally addressed him as "gossip Derues." By his own account he easily judged the characters of the various people with whom he came in contact.

However, Père Cartault's prophecy was not fulfilled: the blessing of Heaven did not descend on the Legrand establishment. There seemed to be a succession of misfortunes which all Derues' zeal and care as shopman could neither prevent nor repair. He by no means contented himself with parading an idle and fruitless hypocrisy, and his most abominable deceptions were not those displayed in the light of day. He watched by night: his singular organisation, outside the ordinary laws of nature, appeared able to dispense with sleep. Gliding about on tiptoe, opening doors noiselessly, with all the skill of an accomplished thief, he pillaged shop and cellar, and sold his plunder in remote parts of the town under assumed names. It is difficult to understand how his strength supported the fatigue of this double existence; he had barely arrived at puberty, and art had been obliged to assist the retarded development of nature. But he lived only for evil, and the Spirit of Evil supplied the physical vigour which was wanting. An insane love of money (the only passion he knew) brought him by degrees back to his starting-point of crime; he concealed it in hiding-places wrought in the thick walls, in holes dug out by his nails. As soon as he got any, he brought it exactly as a wild beast brings a piece of bleeding flesh to his lair; and often, by the glimmer of a dark lantern, kneeling in adoration before this shameful idol, his eyes sparkling with ferocious joy, with a smile which suggested a hyena's delight over its prey, he would contemplate his money, counting and kissing it.

These continual thefts brought trouble into the Legrand affairs, cancelled all profits, and slowly brought on ruin. The widow had no suspicion of Derues' disgraceful dealings, and he carefully referred the damage to other causes, quite worthy of himself. Sometimes it was a bottle of oil, or of brandy, or some other commodity, which was found spilt, broken, or damaged, which accidents he attributed to the enormous quantity of rats which infested the cellar and the house. At length, unable to meet her engagements, Madame Legrand made the business over to him in February 1770. He was then twenty-five years and six months old, and was accepted as a merchant grocer in August the same year. By an agreement drawn up between them, Derues undertook to pay twelve hundred livres for the goodwill, and to lodge her rent free during the remainder of her lease, which had still nine years to run. Being thus obliged to give up business to escape bankruptcy, Madame Legrand surrendered to her creditors any goods remaining in her warehouse; and Derues easily made arrangements to take them over very cheaply. The first step thus made, he was now able to enrich himself safely and to defraud with impunity under the cover of his stolen reputation.

One of his uncles, a flour merchant at Chartres, came habitually twice a year to Paris to settle accounts with his correspondents. A sum of twelve hundred francs, locked up in a drawer, was stolen from him, and, accompanied by his nephew, he went to inform the police. On investigation being made, it was found that the chest of drawers had been broken at the top. As at the time of the theft of the seventy-nine louis from the abbé, Derues was the only person known to have entered his uncle's room. The innkeeper swore to this, but the uncle took pains to justify his nephew, and showed his confidence shortly after by becoming surety for him to the extent of five thousand livres. Derues failed to pay when the time expired, and the holder of the note was obliged to sue the surety for it.

He made use of any means, even the most impudent, which

enabled him to appropriate other people's property. A provincial grocer on one occasion sent him a thousandweight of honey in barrels to be sold on commission. Two or three months passed, and he asked for an account of the sale. Derues replied that he had not yet been able to dispose of it advantageously, and there ensued a fresh delay, followed by the same question and the same reply. At length, when more than a year had passed, the grocer came to Paris, examined his barrels, and found that five hundred pounds were missing. He claimed damages from Derues, who declared he had never received any more, and as the honey had been sent in confidence, and there was no contract and no receipt to show, the provincial tradesman could not obtain compensation.

As though having risen by the ruin of Madame Legrand and her four children was not enough, Derues grudged even the morsel of bread he had been obliged to leave her. A few days after the fire in the cellar, which enabled him to go through a second bankruptcy, Madame Legrand, now undeceived and not believing his lamentations, demanded the money due to her, according to their agreement. Derues pretended to look for his copy of the contract, and could not find it. "Give me yours, madame," said he; "we will write the receipt upon it. Here is the money."

The widow opened her purse and took out her copy; Derues snatched it, and tore it up. "Now," he exclaimed, "you are paid; I owe you nothing now. If you like, I will declare it on oath in court, and no one will disbelieve my word."

"Wretched man," said the unfortunate widow, "may God forgive your soul; but your body will assuredly end on the gallows!"

It was in vain that she complained, and told of this abominable swindle; Derues had been beforehand with her, and the slander he had disseminated bore its fruits. It was said that his old mistress was endeavouring by an odious falsehood to destroy the reputation of a man who had refused to be her lover. Although reduced to poverty, she left the house where she had a right to remain rent free, preferring the hardest and

dreariest life to the torture of remaining under the same roof with the man who had caused her ruin.

We might relate a hundred other pieces of knavery, but it must not be supposed that having begun by murder, Derues would draw back and remain contented with theft. Two fraudulent bankruptcies would have sufficed for most people; for him they were merely a harmless pastime. Here we must place two dark and obscure stories, two crimes of which he is accused, two victims whose death-groans no one heard.

The hypocrite's excellent reputation had crossed the Parisian bounds. A young man from the country, intending to start as a grocer in the capital, applied to Derues for the necessary information and begged for advice. He arrived at the latter's house with a sum of eight thousand livres, which he placed in Derues' hands, asking him for assistance in finding a business. The sight of gold was enough to rouse the instinct of crime in Derues, and the witches who hailed Macbeth with the promise of royalty did not rouse the latter's ambitious desires to a greater height than the chance of wealth did the greed of the assassin; whose hands, once closed over the eight thousand livres, were never again relaxed. He received them as a deposit, and hid them along with his previous plunder, vowing never to return them. Several days had elapsed, when one afternoon Derues returned home with an air of such unusual cheerfulness that the young man questioned him. "Have you heard some good news for me?" he asked, "or have you had some luck yourself?"

"My young friend," answered Derues, "as for me, success depends on my own efforts, and fortune smiles on me. But I have promised to be useful to you, your parents have trusted me, and I must prove that their confidence is well founded. I have heard to-day of a business for disposal in one of the best parts of Paris. You can have it for twelve thousand livres, and I wish I could lend you the amount you want. But you must write to your father, persuade him, reason with him; do not lose so good a chance. He must make a little sacrifice, and he will be grateful to me later."

In accordance with their son's request, the young man's parents despatched a sum of four thousand livres, requesting Derues to lose no time in concluding the purchase.

Three weeks later, the father, very uneasy, arrived in Paris. He came to inquire about his son, having heard nothing from him. Derues received him with the utmost astonishment, appearing convinced that the young man had returned home. One day, he said, the youth informed him that he had heard from his father, who had given up all idea of establishing him in Paris, having arranged an advantageous marriage for him near home; and he had taken his twelve thousand livres, for which Derues produced a receipt, and started on his return journey.

One evening, when nearly dark, Derues had gone out with his guest, who complained of headache and internal pains. Where did they go? No one knew; but Derues only returned at daybreak, alone, weary and exhausted, and the young man was never again heard of.

One of his apprentices was the constant object of reproof. The boy was accused of negligence, wasting his time, of spending three hours over a task which might have been done in less than one. When Derues had convinced the father, a Parisian bourgeois, that his son was a bad boy and a good-for-nothing, he came to this man one day in a state of wild excitement.

"Your son," he said, "ran away yesterday with six hundred livres, with which I had to meet a bill to-day. He knew where I kept this money, and has taken it."

He threatened to go before a magistrate and denounce the thief, and was only appeased by being paid the sum he claimed to have lost. But he had gone out with the lad the evening before, and returned alone in the early hours of the morning.

However, the veil which concealed the truth was becoming more and more transparent every day. Three bankruptcies had diminished the consideration he enjoyed, and people began to listen to complaints and accusations which till now had

been considered mere inventions designed to injure him. Another attempt at trickery made him feel it desirable to leave the neighbourhood.

He had rented a house close to his own, the shop of which had been tenanted for seven or eight years by a wine merchant. He required from this man, if he wished to remain where he was, a sum of six hundred livres as a payment for goodwill. Although the wine merchant considered it an exorbitant charge, yet on reflection he decided to pay it rather than go, having established a good business on these premises, as was well known. Before long a still more arrant piece of dishonesty gave him an opportunity for revenge. A young man of good family, who was boarding with him in order to gain some business experience, having gone into Derues' shop to make some purchases, amused himself while waiting by idly writing his name on a piece of blank paper lying on the counter; which he left there without thinking more about it. Derues, knowing the young man had means, as soon as he had gone, converted the signed paper into a promissory note for two thousand livres, to his order, payable at the majority of the signer. The bill, negotiated in trade, arrived when due at the wine merchant's, who, much surprised, called his young boarder and showed him the paper adorned with his signature. The youth was utterly confounded, having no knowledge of the bill whatever, but nevertheless could not deny his signature. On examining the paper carefully, the handwriting was recognised as Derues'. The wine merchant sent for him, and when he arrived, made him enter a room, and having locked the door, produced the promissory note. Derues acknowledged having written it, and tried various falsehoods to excuse himself. No one listened to him, and the merchant threatened to place the matter in the hands of the police. Then Derues wept, implored, fell on his knees, acknowledged his guilt, and begged for mercy. He agreed to restore the six hundred livres exacted from the wine merchant, on condition that he should see the note destroyed and that the matter should end there. He was then about to be married, and dreaded a scandal.

Shortly after, he married Marie-Louise Nicolais, daughter of a harness-maker at Melun.

One's first impression in considering this marriage is one of profound sorrow and utmost pity for the young girl whose destiny was linked with that of this monster. One thinks of the horrible future; of youth and innocence blighted by the tainting breath of the homicide; of candour united to hypocrisy; of virtue to wickedness; of legitimate desires linked to disgraceful passions; of purity mixed with corruption. The thought of these contrasts is revolting, and one pities such a dreadful fate. But we must not decide hastily. Madame Derues has not been convicted of any active part in her husband's later crimes, but her history, combined with his, shows no trace of suffering, nor of any revolt against a terrible complicity. In her case the evidence is doubtful, and public opinion must decide later.

In 1773, Derues relinquished retail business, and left the Saint Victor neighbourhood, having taken an apartment in the rue des Deux Boules, near the rue Bertin-Poirée, in the parish of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where he had been married. He first acted on commission for the Benedictine-Camaldulian fathers of the forest of Sénart, who had heard of him as a man wholly given to piety; then, giving himself up to usury, he undertook what is known as "business affairs," a profession which, in such hands, could not fail to be lucrative, being aided by his exemplary morals and honest appearance. It was the more easy for him to impose on others, as he could not be accused of any of the deadly vices which so often end in ruin—gaming, wine, and women. Until now he had displayed only one passion, that of avarice, but now another developed itself, that of ambition. He bought houses and land, and when the money was due, allowed himself to be sued for it; he bought even lawsuits, which he muddled with all the skill of a rascally attorney. Experienced in bankruptcy, he undertook the management of failures, contriving to make dishonesty appear in the light of unfortunate virtue. When this demon was not occupied with poison, his hands were busy with every social iniquity; he could only live and breathe in an atmosphere of corruption.

His wife, who had already presented him with a daughter, gave birth to a son in February 1774. Derues, in order to better support the airs of grandeur and the territorial title which he had assumed, invited persons of distinction to act as sponsors. The child was baptized Tuesday, February 15th. We give the text of the baptismal register, as a curiosity:—

"Antoine-Maximilian-Joseph, son of Antoine-François Derues, gentleman, seigneur of Gendeville, Herchies, Viquemont, and other places, formerly merchant grocer; and of Madame Marie-Louise Nicolais, his wife. Godfathers, T. H. and T. P., lords of, etc. etc. Godmothers, Madame M. Fr. C. D. V., etc. etc. (*Signed*) A. F. DERUES, Senior."

But all this dignity did not exclude the sheriff's officers, whom, as befitted so great a man, he treated with the utmost insolence, overwhelming them with abuse when they came to enforce an execution. Such scandals had several times aroused the curiosity of his neighbours, and did not redound to his credit. His landlord, wearied of all this clamour, and most especially weary of never getting any rent without a fight for it, gave him notice to quit. Derues removed to the rue Beaubourg, where he continued to act as commission agent under the name of Cyrano Derues de Bury.

And now we will concern ourselves no more with the unravelling of this tissue of imposition; we will wander no longer in this labyrinth of fraud, of low and vile intrigue, of dark crime of which the clue disappears in the night, and of which the trace is lost in a doubtful mixture of blood and mire; we will listen no longer to the cry of the widow and her four children reduced to beggary, to the groans of obscure victims, to the cries of terror and the death-groan which echoed one night through the vaults of a country house near Beauvais. Behold other victims whose cries are yet louder, behold yet other crimes and a punishment which equals them in terror! Let these nameless ghosts, these silent spectres, lose themselves in the clear daylight which now appears, and make room for

other phantoms which rend their shrouds and issue from the tomb demanding vengeance.

Derues was now soon to have a chance of obtaining immortality. Hitherto his blows had been struck by chance, henceforth he uses all the resources of his infernal imagination; he concentrates all his strength on one point—conceives and executes his crowning piece of wickedness. He employs for two years all his science as cheat, forger, and poisoner in extending the net which was to entangle a whole family; and, taken in his own snare, he struggles in vain; in vain does he seek to gnaw through the meshes which confine him. The foot placed on the last rung of this ladder of crime, stands also on the first step by which he mounts the scaffold.

About a mile from Villeneuve-le-Roi-les-Sens, there stood in 1775 a handsome house, overlooking the windings of the Yonne on one side, and on the other a garden and park belonging to the estate of Buisson-Souef. It was a large property, admirably situated, and containing productive fields, wood, and water; but not everywhere kept in good order, and showing something of the embarrassed fortune of its owner. During some years the only repairs had been those necessary in the house itself and its immediate vicinity. Here and there pieces of dilapidated wall threatened to fall altogether, and enormous stems of ivy had invaded and stifled vigorous trees; in the remoter portions of the park briers barred the road and made walking almost impossible. This disorder was not destitute of charm, and at an epoch when landscape gardening consisted chiefly in straight alleys, and in giving to nature a cold and monotonous symmetry, one's eye rested with pleasure on these neglected clumps, on these waters which had taken a different course to that which art had assigned to them, on these unexpected and picturesque scenes.

A wide terrace, overlooking the winding river, extended along the front of the house. Three men were walking on it—two priests, and the owner of Buisson-Souef, Monsieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte. One priest was the curé of Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens, the other was a Camaldulian monk, who

had come to see the curé about a clerical matter, and who was spending some days at the presbytery. The conversation did not appear to be lively. Every now and then Monsieur de Lamotte stood still, and, shading his eyes with his hand from the brilliant sunlight which flooded the plain, and was strongly reflected from the water, endeavoured to see if some new object had not appeared on the horizon, then slowly resumed his walk with a movement of uneasy impatience. The tower clock struck with a noisy resonance.

"Six o'clock already!" he exclaimed. "They will assuredly not arrive to-day."

"Why despair?" said the curé. "Your servant has gone to meet them; we might see their boat any moment."

"But, my father," returned Monsieur de Lamotte, "the long days are already past. In another hour the mist will rise, and then they would not venture on the river."

"Well, if that happens, we shall have to be patient; they will stay all night at some little distance, and you will see them to-morrow morning."

"My brother is right," said the other priest. "Come, monsieur; do not be anxious."

"You both speak with the indifference of persons to whom family troubles are unknown."

"What!" said the curé, "do you really think that because our sacred profession condemns us both to celibacy, we are therefore unable to comprehend an affection such as yours, on which I myself pronounced the hallowing benediction of the Church—if you remember—nearly fifteen years ago?"

"Is it perhaps intentionally, my father, that you recall the date of my marriage? I readily admit that the love of one's neighbour may enlighten you as to another love to which you have yourself been a stranger. I daresay it seems odd to you that a man of my age should be anxious about so little, as though he were a love-sick youth; but for some time past I have had presentiments of evil, and I am really becoming superstitious!"

He again stood still, gazing up the river, and, seeing nothing,

resumed his place between the two priests, who had continued their walk.

"Yes," he continued, "I have presentiments which refuse to be shaken off. I am not so old that age can have weakened my powers and reduced me to childishness, I cannot even say what I am afraid of, but separation is painful and causes an involuntary terror. Strange, is it not? Formerly, I used to leave my wife for months together, when she was young and my son only an infant; I loved her passionately, yet I could go with pleasure. Why, I wonder, is it so different now? Why should a journey to Paris on business, and a few hours' delay, make me so terribly uneasy? Do you remember, my father," he resumed, after a pause, turning to the curé,—"do you remember how lovely Marie looked on our wedding-day? Do you remember her dazzling complexion and the innocent candour of her expression?—the sure token of the most truthful and purest of minds! That is why I love her so much now; we do not now sigh for one another, but the second love is stronger than the first, for it is founded on recollection, and is tranquil and confident in friendship. . . . It is strange that they have not returned; something must have happened! If they do not return this evening, and I do not now think it possible, I shall go to Paris myself to-morrow."

"I think," said the other priest, "that at twenty you must indeed have been excitable, a veritable tinder-box, to have retained so much energy! Come, monsieur, try to calm yourself and have patience: you yourself admit it can only be a few hours' delay."

"But my son accompanied his mother, and he is our only one, and so delicate! He alone remains of our three children, and you do not realise how the affection of parents who feel age approaching is concentrated on an only child! If I lost Edouard I should die!"

"I suppose, then, as you let him go, his presence at Paris was necessary?"

"No; his mother went to obtain a loan which is needed for the improvements required on the estate."

"Why, then, did you let him go?"

"I would willingly have kept him here, but his mother wished to take him. A separation is as trying to her as to me, and we all but quarrelled over it. I gave way."

"There was one way of satisfying all three, you might have gone also."

"Yes, but Monsieur le curé will tell you that a fortnight ago I was chained to my arm-chair, swearing under my breath like a pagan, and cursing the follies of my youth!—Forgive me, my father; I mean that I had the gout, and I forgot that I am not the only sufferer, and that it racks the old age of the philosopher quite as much as that of the courtier."

The fresh wind which often rises just at sunset was already rustling in the leaves; long shadows darkened the course of the Yonne and stretched across the plain; the water, slightly troubled, reflected a confused outline of its banks and the clouded blue of the sky. The three gentlemen stopped at the end of the terrace and gazed into the already fading distance. A black spot, which they had just observed in the middle of the river, caught a gleam of light in passing a low meadow between two hills, and for a moment took shape as a barge, then was lost again, and could not be distinguished from the water. Another moment, and it reappeared more distinctly; it was indeed a barge, and now the horse could be seen towing it against the current. Again it was lost at a bend of the river shaded by willows, and they had to resign themselves to incertitude for several minutes. Then a white handkerchief was waved on the prow of the boat, and Monsieur de Lamotte uttered a joyful exclamation.

"It is indeed they!" he cried. "Do you see them, Monsieur le curé? I see my boy; he is waving the handkerchief, and his mother is with him. But I think there is a third person—yes, there is a man, is there not? Look well."

"Indeed," said the curé, "if my bad sight does not deceive me, I should say there was someone seated near the rudder; but it looks like a child."

"Probably someone from the neighbourhood, who has profited by the chance of a lift home."

The boat was advancing rapidly; they could now hear the cracking of the whip with which the servant urged on the tow-horse. And now it stopped, at an easy landing-place, barely fifty paces from the terrace. Madame de Lamotte landed with her son and the stranger, and her husband descended from the terrace to meet her. Long before he arrived at the garden gate, his son's arms were round his neck.

"Are you quite well, Edouard?"

"Oh yes, perfectly."

"And your mother?"

"Quite well too. She is behind, in as great a hurry to meet you as I am. But she can't run as I do, and you must go half-way."

"Whom have you brought with you?"

"A gentleman from Paris."

"From Paris?"

"Yes, a Monsieur Derues. But mamma will tell you all about that. Here she is."

The curé and the monk arrived just as Monsieur de Lamotte folded his wife in his arms. Although she had passed her fortieth year, she was still beautiful enough to justify her husband's eulogism. A moderate plumpness had preserved the freshness and softness of her skin; her smile was charming, and her large blue eyes expressed both gentleness and goodness. Seen beside this smiling and serene countenance, the appearance of the stranger was downright repulsive, and Monsieur de Lamotte could hardly repress a start of disagreeable surprise at the pitiful and sordid aspect of this diminutive person, who stood apart, looking overwhelmed by conscious inferiority. He was still more astonished when he saw his son take him by the hand with friendly kindness, and heard him say—

"Will you come with me, my friend? We will follow my father and mother."

Madame de Lamotte, having greeted the curé, looked at the monk, who was a stranger to her. A word or two explained

matters, and she took her husband's arm, declining to answer any questions until she reached the house, and laughing at his curiosity.

Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, one of the king's equerries, seigneur of Grange-Flandre, Valperfond, etc., had married Marie-Françoise Périer in 1760. Their fortune resembled many others of that period: it was more nominal than actual, more showy than solid. Not that the husband and wife had any cause for self-reproach, or that their estates had suffered from dissipation; unstained by the corrupt manners of the period, their union had been a model of sincere affection, of domestic virtue and mutual confidence. Marie-Françoise was quite beautiful enough to have made a sensation in society, but she renounced it of her own accord, in order to devote herself to the duties of a wife and mother. The only serious grief she and her husband had experienced was the loss of two young children. Edouard, though delicate from his birth, had nevertheless passed the trying years of infancy and early adolescence; he was then nearly fourteen. With a sweet and rather effeminate expression, blue eyes and a pleasant smile, he was a striking likeness of his mother. His father's affection exaggerated the dangers which threatened the boy, and in his eyes the slightest indisposition became a serious malady; his mother shared these fears, and in consequence of this anxiety Edouard's education had been much neglected. He had been brought up at Buisson-Souef, and allowed to run wild from morning till night, like a young fawn, exercising the vigour and activity of its limbs. He had still the simplicity and general ignorance of a child of nine or ten.

The necessity of appearing at court and suitably defraying the expenses of his office had made great inroads on Monsieur de Lamotte's fortune. He had of late lived at Buisson-Souef in the most complete retirement; but notwithstanding this too long deferred attention to his affairs, his property was ruining him, for the place required a large expenditure, and absorbed a large amount of his income without making any tangible return. He had always hesitated to dispose of the estate on

account of its associations; it was there he had met, courted, and married his beloved wife; there that the happy days of their youth had been spent; there that they both wished to grow old together.

Such was the family to which accident had now introduced Derues. The unfavourable impression made on Monsieur de Lamotte had not passed unperceived by him; but, being quite accustomed to the instinctive repugnance which his first appearance generally inspired, Derues had made a successful study of how to combat and efface this antagonistic feeling, and replace it by confidence, using different means according to the persons he had to deal with. He understood at once that vulgar methods would be useless with Monsieur de Lamotte, whose appearance and manners indicated both the man of the world and the man of intelligence, and also he had to consider the two priests, who were both observing him attentively. Fearing a false step, he assumed the most simple and insignificant deportment he could, knowing that sooner or later a third person would rehabilitate him in the opinion of those present. Nor did he wait long.

Arrived at the drawing-room, Monsieur de Lamotte requested the company to be seated. Derues acknowledged the courtesy by a bow, and there was a moment of silence, while Edouard and his mother looked at each other and smiled. The silence was broken by Madame de Lamotte.

"Dear Pierre," she said, "you are surprised to see us accompanied by a stranger, but when you hear what he has done for us you will thank me for having induced him to return here with us."

"Allow me," interrupted Derues,—"allow me to tell you what happened. The gratitude which madame imagines she owes me causes her to exaggerate a small service which anybody would have been delighted to render."

"No, monsieur; let me tell it."

"Let mamma tell the story," said Edouard.

"What is it, then? What happened?" said Monsieur de Lamotte.

"I am quite ashamed," answered Derues; "but I obey your wishes, madame."

"Yes," replied Madame de Lamotte, "keep your seat, I wish it. Imagine, Pierre, just six days ago, an accident happened to Edouard and me which might have had serious consequences."

"And you never wrote to me, Marie?"

"I should only have made you anxious, and to no purpose. I had some business in one of the most crowded parts of Paris; I took a chair, and Edouard walked beside me. In the rue Beaubourg we were suddenly surrounded by a mob of low people, who were quarrelling. Carriages stopped the way, and the horses of one of these took fright in the confusion and uproar, and bolted, in spite of the coachman's endeavours to keep them in hand. It was a horrible tumult, and I tried to get out of the chair, but at that moment the chairmen were both knocked down, and I fell. It is a miracle I was not crushed. I was dragged insensible from under the horses' feet and carried into the house before which all this took place. There, sheltered in a shop and safe from the crowd which encumbered the doorway, I recovered my senses, thanks to the assistance of Monsieur Derues, who lives there. But that is not all: when I recovered I could not walk, I had been so shaken by the fright, the fall, and the danger I had incurred, and I had to accept his offer of finding me another chair when the crowd should disperse, and meanwhile to take shelter in his rooms with his wife, who showed me the kindest attention."

"Monsieur——" said Monsieur de Lamotte, rising. But his wife stopped him.

"Wait a moment; I have not finished yet. Monsieur Derues came back in an hour, and I was then feeling better; but before I left I was stupid enough to say that I had been robbed in the confusion; my diamond earrings, which had belonged to my mother, were gone. You cannot imagine the trouble Monsieur Derues took to discover the thief, and all the appeals he made to the police—I was really ashamed!"

Although Monsieur de Lamotte did not yet understand what motive, other than gratitude, had induced his wife to bring this

stranger home with her, he again rose from his seat, and going to Derues, held out his hand.

"I understand now the attachment my son shows for you. You are wrong in trying to lessen your good deed in order to escape from our gratitude, Monsieur Derues."

"Monsieur Derues?" inquired the monk.

"Do you know the name, my father?" asked Madame de Lamotte eagerly.

"Edouard had already told me," said the monk, approaching Derues.

"You live in the rue Beaubourg, and you are Monsieur Derues, formerly a retail grocer?"

"The same, my brother."

"Should you require a reference, I can give it. Chance, madame, has made you acquainted with a man whose reputation for piety and honour is well established; he will permit me to add my praises to yours."

"Indeed, I do not know how I deserve so much honour."

"I am Brother Marchois, of the Camaldulian order. You see that I know you well."

The monk then proceeded to explain that his community had confided their affairs to Derues' honesty, he undertaking to dispose of the articles manufactured by the monks in their retreat. He then recounted a number of good actions and of marks of piety, which were heard with pleasure and admiration by those present. Derues received this cloud of incense with an appearance of sincere modesty and humility, which would have deceived the most skilful physiognomist.

When the eulogistic warmth of the good brother began to slacken it was already nearly dark, and the two priests had barely time to regain the presbytery without incurring the risk of breaking their necks in the rough road which led to it. They departed at once, and a room was got ready for Derues.

"To-morrow," said Madame de Lamotte as they separated, "you can discuss with my husband the business on which you came: to-morrow, or another day, for I beg that you will make

yourself at home here, and the longer you will stay the better it will please us."

The night was a sleepless one for Derues, whose brain was occupied by a confusion of criminal plans. The chance which had caused his acquaintance with Madame de Lamotte, and even more the accident of Brother Marchois appearing in the nick of time, to enlarge upon the praises which gave him so excellent a character, seemed like favourable omens not to be neglected. He began to imagine fresh villanies, to outline an unheard-of crime, which as yet he could not definitely trace out; but anyhow there would be plunder to seize and blood to spill, and the spirit of murder excited and kept him awake, just as remorse might have troubled the repose of another.

Meanwhile Madame de Lamotte, having retired with her husband, was saying to the latter—

"Well, now! what do you think of my protégé, or rather, of the protector which Heaven sent me?"

"I think that physiognomy is often very deceptive, for I should have been quite willing to hang him on the strength of his."

"It is true that his appearance is not attractive, and it led me into a foolish mistake which I quickly regretted. When I recovered consciousness, and saw him attending on me, much worse and more carelessly dressed than he is to-day——"

"You were frightened?"

"No, not exactly; but I thought I must be indebted to a man of the lowest class, to some poor fellow who was really starving, and my first effort at gratitude was to offer him a piece of gold."

"Did he refuse it?"

"No; he accepted it for the poor of the parish. Then he told me his name, Cyrano Derues de Bury, and told me that the shop and the goods it contained were his own property, and that he occupied an apartment in the house. I floundered in excuses, but he replied that he blessed the mistake, inasmuch as it would enable him to relieve some unfortunate people. I was so touched with his goodness that I offered him a second piece of gold."

"You were quite right, my dear; but what induced you to bring him to Buisson? I should have gone to see and thank him the first time I went to Paris, and meanwhile a letter would have been sufficient. Did he carry his complaisance and interest so far as to offer you his escort?"

"Ah! I see you cannot get over your first impression—honestly, is it not so?"

"Indeed," exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte, laughing heartily, "it is truly unlucky for a decent man to have such a face as that! He ought to give Providence no rest until he obtains the gift of another countenance."

"Always these prejudices! It is not the poor man's fault that he was born like that."

"Well, you said something about business we were to discuss together—what is it?"

"I believe he can help us to obtain the money we are in want of."

"And who told him that we wanted any?"

"I did."

"You! Come, it certainly seems that this gentleman is to be a family friend. And pray what induced you to confide in him to this extent?"

"You would have known by now, if you did not interrupt. Let me tell you all in order. The day after my accident I went out with Edouard about midday, and I went to again express my gratitude for his kindness. I was received by Madame Derues, who told me her husband was out, and that he had gone to my hotel to inquire after me and my son, and also to see if anything had been heard of my stolen earrings. She appeared a simple and very ordinary sort of person, and she begged me to sit down and wait for her husband. I thought it would be uncivil not to do so, and Monsieur Derues appeared in about two hours. The first thing he did, after having saluted me and inquired most particularly after my health, was to ask for his children, two charming little things, fresh and rosy, whom he covered with kisses. We talked about indifferent matters, then he offered me his services, placed himself at my

disposal, and begged me to spare neither his time nor his trouble. I then told him what had brought me to Paris, and also the disappointments I had encountered, for of all the people I had seen not one had given me a favourable answer. He said that he might possibly be of some use to me, and the very next day told me that he had seen a capitalist, but could do nothing without more precise information. Then I thought it might be better to bring him here, so that he might talk matters over with you. When I first asked him, he refused altogether, and only yielded to my earnest entreaties and Edouard's. This is the history, dear, of the circumstances under which I made Monsieur Derues' aquaintance. I hope you do not think I have acted foolishly?"

"Very well," said Monsieur de Lamotte, "I will talk to him to-morrow, and in any case I promise you I will be civil to him. I will not forget that he has been useful to you." With which promise the conversation came to a close.

Skilled in assuming any kind of mask and in playing every sort of part, Derues did not find it difficult to overcome Monsieur de Lamotte's prejudices, and in order to obtain the goodwill of the father he made a skilful use of the friendship which the son had formed with him. One can hardly think that he already meditated the crime which he carried out later; one prefers to believe that these atrocious plots were not invented so long beforehand. But he was already a prey to the idea, and nothing henceforth could turn him from it. By what route he should arrive at the distant goal which his greed foresaw, he knew not as yet, but he had said to himself, "One day this property shall be mine." It was the death-warrant of those who owned it.

We have no details, no information as to Derues' first visit to Buisson-Souef, but when he departed he had obtained the complete confidence of the family, and a regular correspondence was carried on between him and the Lamottes. It was thus that he was able to exercise his talent of forgery, and succeeded in imitating the writing of this unfortunate lady so as to be able even to deceive her husband. Several months passed,

and none of the hopes which Derues had inspired were realised; a loan was always on the point of being arranged, and regularly failed because of some unforeseen circumstance. These pretended negotiations were managed by Derues with so much skill and cunning that instead of being suspected, he was pitied for having so much useless trouble. Meanwhile, Monsieur de Lamotte's money difficulties increased, and the sale of Buisson-Souef became inevitable. Derues offered himself as a purchaser, and actually acquired the property by private contract, dated December 22, 1775. It was agreed between the parties that the purchase-money of one hundred and thirty thousand livres should not be paid until 1776, in order to allow Derues to collect the various sums at his disposal. It was an important purchase, which, he said, he only made on account of his interest in Monsieur de Lamotte, and his wish to put an end to the latter's difficulties.

But when the period agreed on arrived, towards the middle of 1776, Derues found it impossible to pay. It is certain that he never meant to do so; and a special peculiarity of this dismal story is the avarice of the man, the passion for money which overruled all his actions, and occasionally caused him to neglect necessary prudence. Enriched by three bankruptcies, by continual thefts, by usury, the gold he acquired promptly seemed to disappear. He stuck at nothing to obtain it, and once in his grasp, he never let it go again. Frequently he risked the loss of his character for honest dealing rather than relinquish a fraction of his wealth. According to many credible people, it was generally believed by his contemporaries that this monster possessed treasures which he had buried in the ground, the hiding-place of which no one knew, not even his wife. Perhaps it is only a vague and unfounded rumour, which should be rejected; or is it, perhaps, a truth which failed to reveal itself? It would be strange if after the lapse of half a century the hiding-place were to open and give up the fruit of his rapine. Who knows whether some of this treasure, accidentally discovered, may not have founded fortunes whose origin is unknown, even to their possessors?

Although it was of the utmost importance not to arouse Monsieur de Lamotte's suspicions just at the moment when he ought to be paying him so large a sum, Derues was actually at this time being sued by his creditors. But in those days ordinary lawsuits had no publicity; they struggled and died between the magistrates and advocates without causing any sound. In order to escape the arrest and detention with which he was threatened, he took refuge at Buisson-Souef with his family, and remained there from Whitsuntide till the end of November. After being treated all this time as a friend, Derues departed for Paris, in order, he said, to receive an inheritance which would enable him to pay the required purchase-money.

This pretended inheritance was that of one of his wife's relations, Monsieur Despeignes-Duplessis, who had been murdered in his country house, near Beauvais. It has been strongly suspected that Derues was guilty of this crime. There are, however, no positive proofs, and we prefer only to class it as a simple possibility.

Derues had made formal promises to Monsieur de Lamotte, and it was no longer possible for him to elude them. Either the payment must now be made, or the contract annulled. A new correspondence began between the creditors and the debtor; friendly letters were exchanged, full of protestations on one side and confidence on the other. But all Derues' skill could only obtain a delay of a few months. At length Monsieur de Lamotte, unable to leave Buisson-Souef himself, on account of important business which required his presence, gave his wife a power of attorney, consented to another separation, and sent her to Paris, accompanied by Edouard, and as if to hasten their misfortunes, sent notice of their coming to the expectant murderer.

We have passed quickly over the interval between the first meeting of Monsieur de Lamotte and Derues, and the moment when the victims fell into the trap: we might easily have invented long conversations, and episodes which would have brought Derues' profound hypocrisy into greater relief; but the reader now knows all that we care to show him. We have purposely

lingered in our narration in the endeavour to explain the perversities of this mysterious organisation; we have over-loaded it with all the facts which seem to throw any light upon this sombre character. But now, after these long preparations, the drama opens, the scenes become rapid and lifelike; events, long impeded, accumulate and pass quickly before us, the action is connected and hastens to an end. We shall see Derues like an unwearied Proteus, changing names, costumes, language, multiplying himself in many forms, scattering deceptions and lies from one end of France to the other; and finally, after so many efforts, such prodigies of calculation and activity, end by wrecking himself against a corpse.

The letter written at Buisson-Souef arrived at Paris the morning of the 14th of December. In the course of the day an unknown man presented himself at the hotel where Madame de Lamotte and her son had stayed before, and inquired what rooms were vacant. There were four, and he engaged them for a certain Dumoulin, who had arrived that morning from Bordeaux, and who had passed through Paris in order to meet, at some little distance, relations who would return with him. A part of the rent was paid in advance, and it was expressly stipulated that until his return the rooms should not be let to anyone, as the aforesaid Dumoulin might return with his family and require them at any moment. The same person went to other hotels in the neighbourhood and engaged vacant rooms, sometimes for a stranger he expected, sometimes for friends whom he could not accommodate himself.

At about three o'clock, the Place de Grève was full of people, thousands of heads crowded the windows of the surrounding houses. A parricide was to pay the penalty of his crime—a crime committed under atrocious circumstances, with an unheard-of refinement of barbarity. The punishment corresponded to the crime: the wretched man was broken on the wheel. The most complete and terrible silence prevailed in the multitude eager for ghastly emotions. Three times already had been heard the heavy thud of the instrument which broke the victim's limbs, and a loud cry escaped the sufferer which

made all who heard it shudder with horror. One man only, who, in spite of all his efforts, could not get through the crowd and cross the square, remained unmoved, and looking contemptuously towards the criminal, muttered, "Idiot! he was unable to deceive anyone!"

A few moments later the flames began to rise from the funeral pile, the crowd began to move, and the man was able to make his way through and reach one of the streets leading out of the square.

The sky was overcast, and the grey daylight hardly penetrated the narrow lane, hideous and gloomy as the name it bore, and which, only a few years ago, still wound like a long serpent through the mire of this quarter. Just then it was deserted, owing to the attraction of the execution close by. The man who had just left the square proceeded slowly, attentively reading all the inscriptions on the doors. He stopped at Number 75, where on the threshold of a shop sat a stout woman busily knitting, over whom one read in big yellow letters, "Widow Masson." He saluted the woman, and asked—

"Is there not a cellar to let in this house?"

"There is, master," answered the widow.

"Can I speak to the owner?"

"And that is myself, by your leave."

"Will you show me the cellar? I am a provincial wine merchant, my business often brings me to Paris, and I want a cellar where I could deposit wine which I sell on commission."

They went down together. After examining the place, and ascertaining that it was not too damp for the expensive wine which he wished to leave there, the man agreed about the rent, paid the first term in advance, and was entered on the widow Masson's books under the name of Ducoudray. It is hardly necessary to remark that it should have been Derues.

When he returned home in the evening, his wife told him that a large box had arrived.

"It is all right," he said; "the carpenter from whom I ordered it is a man of his word." Then he supped, and caressed his children. The next day being Sunday, he received the com-

munion, to the great edification of the devout people of the neighbourhood.

On Monday the 16th Madame de Lamotte and Edouard, descending from the Montereau stage-coach, were met by Derues and his wife.

"Did my husband write to you, Monsieur Derues?" inquired Madame de Lamotte.

"Yes, madame, two days ago; and I have arranged our dwelling for your reception."

"What! but did not Monsieur de Lamotte ask you to engage the rooms I have had before at the Hotel de France?"

"He did not say so, and if that was your idea I trust you will change it. Do not deprive me of the pleasure of offering you the hospitality which for so long I have accepted from you. Your room is quite ready, also one for this dear boy," and so saying he took Edouard's hand; "and I am sure if you ask his opinion, he will say you had better be content to stay with me."

"Undoubtedly," said the boy; "and I do not see why there need be any hesitation between friends."

Whether by accident, or secret presentiment, or because she foresaw a possibility of business discussions between them, Madame de Lamotte objected to this arrangement. Derues having a business appointment which he was bound to keep, desired his wife to accompany the Lamottes to the Hôtel de France, and in case of their not being able to find rooms there, mentioned three others as the only ones in the quarter where they could be comfortably accommodated. Two hours later Madame de Lamotte and her son returned to his house in the rue Beaubourg.

The house which Derues occupied stood opposite the rue des Ménétriers, and was pulled down quite lately to make way for the rue Rambuteau. In 1776 it was one of the finest houses of the rue Beaubourg, and it required a certain income to be able to live there, the rents being tolerably high. A large arched doorway gave admittance to a passage, lighted at the other end by a small court, on the far side of which was the shop into which Madame de Lamotte had been taken on the occasion of

the accident. The house staircase was to the right of the passage, and the Derues' dwelling on the entresol. The first room, lighted by a window looking into the court, was used as a dining-room, and led into a simply furnished sitting-room, such as was generally found among the bourgeois and tradespeople of this period. To the right of the sitting-room was a large closet, which could serve as a small study or could hold a bed; to the left was a door opening into the Derues' bedroom, which had been prepared for Madame de Lamotte. Madame Derues would occupy one of the two beds which stood in the alcove. Derues had a bed made up in the sitting-room, and Edouard was accommodated in the little study.

Nothing particular happened during the first few days which followed the Lamottes' arrival. They had not come to Paris only on account of the Buisson-Souef affairs. Edouard was nearly sixteen, and after much hesitation his parents had decided on placing him in some school where his hitherto neglected education might receive more attention. Derues undertook to find a capable tutor, in whose house the boy would be brought up in the religious feeling which the curé of Buisson and his own exhortations had already tended to develop. These proceedings, added to Madame de Lamotte's endeavours to collect various sums due to her husband, took some time. Perhaps, when on the point of executing a terrible crime, Derues tried to postpone the fatal moment, although, considering his character, this seems unlikely, for one cannot do him the honour of crediting him with a single movement of remorse, doubt, or pity. Far from it, it appears from all the information which can be gathered, that Derues, faithful to his own traditions, was simply experimenting on his unfortunate guests, for no sooner were they in his house than both began to complain of constant nausea, which they had never suffered from before. While he thus ascertained the strength of their constitution, he was able, knowing the cause of the malady, to give them relief, so that Madame de Lamotte, although she grew daily weaker, had so much confidence in him as to think it unnecessary to call in a doctor. Fearing to alarm her

husband, she never mentioned her sufferings, and her letters only spoke of the care and kind attention which she received.

On the 15th of January 1777, Edouard was placed in a school in the rue de l'Homme Armé. His mother never saw him again. She went out once more to place her husband's power of attorney with a lawyer in the rue de Paon. On her return she felt so weak and broken-down that she was obliged to go to bed and remain there for several days. On January 29th the unfortunate lady had risen, and was sitting near the window which overlooked the deserted rue des Ménétriers, where clouds of snow were drifting before the wind. Who can guess the sad thoughts which may have possessed her?—all around dark, cold, and silent, tending to produce painful depression and involuntary dread. To escape the gloomy ideas which besieged her, her mind went back to the smiling times of her youth and marriage. She recalled the time when, alone at Buisson during her husband's enforced absences, she wandered with her child in the cool and shaded walks of the park, and sat out in the evening, inhaling the scent of the flowers, and listening to the murmur of the water, or the sound of the whispering breeze in the leaves. Then, coming back from these sweet recollections to reality, she shed tears, and called on her husband and son. So deep was her reverie that she did not hear the room door open, did not perceive that darkness had come on. The light of a candle, dispersing the shadows, made her start; she turned her head, and saw Derues coming towards her. He smiled, and she made an effort to keep back the tears which were shining in her eyes, and to appear calm.

"I am afraid I disturb you," he said. "I came to ask a favour, madame."

"What is it, Monsieur Derues?" she inquired.

"Will you allow me to have a large chest brought into this room? I ought to pack some valuable things in it which are in my charge, and are now in this cupboard. I am afraid it will be in your way."

"Is it not your own house, and is it not rather I who am in

the way and a cause of trouble? Pray have it brought in, and try to forget that I am here. You are most kind to me, but I wish I could spare you all this trouble and that I were fit to go back to Buisson. I had a letter from my husband yesterday——"

"We will talk about that presently, if you wish it," said Derues. "I will go and fetch the servant to help me to carry in this chest. I have put it off hitherto, but it really must be sent in three days."

He went away, and returned in a few minutes. The chest was carried in, and placed before the cupboard at the foot of the bed. Alas! the poor lady little thought it was her own coffin which stood before her!

The maid withdrew, and Derues assisted Madame de Lamotte to a seat near the fire, which he revived with more fuel. He sat down opposite to her, and by the feeble light of the candle placed on a small table between them could contemplate at leisure the ravages wrought by poison on her wasted features.

"I saw your son to-day," he said: "he complains that you neglect him, and have not seen him for twelve days. He does not know you have been ill, nor did I tell him. The dear boy! he loves you so tenderly."

"And I also long to see him. My friend, I cannot tell you what terrible presentiments beset me; it seems as if I were threatened with some great misfortune; and just now, when you came in, I could think only of death. What is the cause of this languor and weakness? It is surely no temporary ailment. Tell me the truth: am I not dreadfully altered? and do you not think my husband will be shocked when he sees me like this?"

"You are unnecessarily anxious," replied Derues; "it is rather a failing of yours. Did I not see you last year tormenting yourself about Edouard's health, when he was not even thinking of being ill? I am not so soon alarmed. My own old profession, and that of chemistry, which I studied in my youth, have given me some acquaintance with medicine.

I have frequently been consulted, and have prescribed for patients whose condition was supposed to be desperate, and I can assure you I have never seen a better and stronger constitution than yours. Try to calm yourself, and do not call up chimeras, because a mind at ease is the greatest enemy of illness. This depression will pass, and then you will regain your strength."

"May God grant it! for I feel weaker every day."

"We have still some business to transact together. The notary at Beauvais writes that the difficulties which prevented his paying over the inheritance of my wife's relation, Monsieur Duplessis, have mostly disappeared. I have a hundred thousand livres at my disposal,—that is to say, at yours,—and in a month at latest I shall be able to pay off my debt. You ask me to be sincere," he continued, with a tinge of reproachful irony; "be sincere in your turn, madame, and acknowledge that you and your husband have both felt uneasy, and that the delays I have been obliged to ask for have not seemed very encouraging to you?"

"It is true," she replied; "but we never questioned your good faith."

"And you were right. One is not always able to carry out one's intentions; events can always upset our calculations; but what really is in our own power is the desire to do right—to be honest; and I can say that I never intentionally wronged anyone. And now I am happy in being able to fulfil my promises to you. I trust when I am the owner of Buisson-Souef you will not feel obliged to leave it."

"Thank you; I should like to come occasionally, for all my happy recollections are connected with it. Is it necessary for me to accompany you to Beauvais?"

"Why should you not? The change would do you good."

She looked up at him and smiled sadly. "I am not in a fit state to undertake it."

"Not if you imagine that you are unable, certainly. Come, have you any confidence in me?"

"The most complete confidence, as you know."

"Very well, then: trust to my care. This very evening I will prepare a draught for you to take to-morrow morning, and I will even now fix the duration of this terrible malady which frightens you so much. In two days I shall fetch Edouard from his school to celebrate the beginning of your convalescence, and we will start, at latest, on February 1st. You are astonished at what I say, but you shall see if I am not a good doctor, and much cleverer than many who pass for such merely because they have obtained a diploma."

"Then, doctor, I will place myself in your hands."

"Remember what I say. *You will leave this on February 1st.*"

"To begin this cure, can you ensure my sleeping to-night?"

"Certainly. I will go now, and send my wife to you. She will bring a draught, which you must promise to take."

"I will exactly follow your prescriptions. Good-night, my friend."

"Good-night, madame; and take courage"; and bowing low, he left the room.

The rest of the evening was spent in preparing the fatal medicine. The next morning, an hour or two after Madame de Lamotte had swallowed it, the maid who had given it her came and told Derues the invalid was sleeping very heavily and snoring, and asked if she ought to be awoke. He went into the room, and, opening the curtains, approached the bed. He listened for some time, and recognised that the supposed snoring was really the death-rattle. He sent the servant off into the country with a letter to one of his friends, telling her not to return until the Monday following, February 3rd. He also sent away his wife, on some unknown pretext, and remained alone with his victim.

So terrible a situation ought to have troubled the mind of the most hardened criminal. A man familiar with murder and accustomed to shed blood might have felt his heart sink, and, in the absence of pity, might have experienced disgust at the sight of this prolonged and useless torture; but Derues, calm and easy, as if unconscious of evil, sat coolly beside the bed, as any doctor might have done. From time to time he felt the

slackening pulse, and looked at the glassy and sightless eyes which turned in their orbits, and he saw without terror the approach of night, which rendered this awful *tête-à-tête* even more horrible. The most profound silence reigned in the house, the street was deserted, and the only sound heard was caused by an icy rain mixed with snow driven against the glass, and occasionally the howl of the wind, which penetrated the chimney and scattered the ashes. A single candle placed behind the curtains lighted this dismal scene, and the irregular flicker of its flame cast weird reflections and dancing shadows on the walls of the alcove. There came a lull in the wind, the rain ceased, and during this instant of calm someone knocked, at first gently, and then sharply, at the outer door. Derues dropped the dying woman's hand and bent forward to listen. The knock was repeated, and he grew pale. He threw the sheet, as if it were a shroud, over his victim's head, drew the curtains of the alcove, and went to the door. "Who is there?" he inquired.

"Open, Monsieur Derues," said a voice which he recognised as that of a woman of Chartres whose affairs he managed, and who had entrusted him with sundry deeds in order that he might receive the money due to her. This woman had begun to entertain doubts as to Derues' honesty, and as she was leaving Paris the next day, had resolved to get the papers out of his hands.

"Open the door," she repeated. "Don't you know my voice?"

"I am sorry I cannot let you in. My servant is out; she has taken the key and locked the door outside."

"You must let me in," the woman continued; "it is absolutely necessary I should speak to you."

"Come to-morrow."

"I leave Paris to-morrow, and I must have those papers to-night."

He again refused, but she spoke firmly and decidedly. "I must come in. The porter said you were all out, but, from the rue des Ménétriers, I could see the light in your room. My brother is with me, and I left him below. I shall call him, if you don't open the door."

"Come in, then," said Derues; "your papers are in the sitting-room. Wait here, and I will fetch them." The woman looked at him and took his hand. "Heavens! how pale you are! What is the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter: will you wait here?" But she would not release of his arm, and followed him into the sitting-room, where Derues began to seek hurriedly among the various papers which covered a table. "Here they are," he said; "now you can go."

"Really," said the woman, examining her deeds carefully, "never yet did I see you in such a hurry to give up things which don't belong to you. But do hold that candle steadily; your hand is shaking so that I cannot see to read."

At that moment the silence which prevailed all round was broken by a cry of anguish, a long groan proceeding from the chamber to the right of the sitting-room.

"What is that?" cried the woman. "Surely it is a dying person!"

The sense of the danger which threatened made Derues pull himself together. "Do not be alarmed," he said. "My wife has been seized with a violent fever; she is quite delirious now, and that is why I told the porter to let no one come up."

But the groans in the next room continued, and the unwelcome visitor, overcome by terror which she could neither surmount nor explain, took a hasty leave, and descended the staircase with all possible rapidity. As soon as he could close the door, Derues returned to the bedroom.

Nature frequently collects all her expiring strength at the last moment of existence. The unhappy lady struggled beneath her coverings; the agony she suffered had given her a convulsive energy, and inarticulate sounds proceeded from her mouth. Derues approached and held her on the bed. She sank back on the pillow, shuddering convulsively, her hands plucking and twisting the sheets, her teeth chattering and biting the loose hair which fell over her face and shoulders. "Water! water!" she cried; and then, "Edouard,—my husband!—Edouard!—is it you?" Then rising with a last effort, she seized her murderer by the arm, repeating, "Edouard!—oh!" and then fell heavily,

dragging Derues down with her. His face was against hers; he raised his head, but the dying hand, clenched in agony, had closed upon him like a vice. The icy fingers seemed made of iron and could not be opened, as though the victim had seized on her assassin as a prey, and clung to the proof of his crime.

Derues at last freed himself, and putting his hand on her heart, "It is over," he remarked; "she has been a long time about it. What o'clock is it?—Nine! She has struggled against death for twelve hours!"

While the limbs still retained a little warmth, he drew the feet together, crossed the hands on the breast, and placed the body in the chest. When he had locked it up, he remade the bed, undressed himself, and slept comfortably in the other one.

The next day, February 1st, the day he had fixed for the "going out" of Madame de Lamotte, he caused the chest to be placed on a hand-cart and carried at about ten o'clock in the morning to the workshop of a carpenter of his acquaintance called Mouchy, who dwelt near the Louvre. The two commissionaires employed had been selected in distant quarters, and did not know each other. They were well paid, and each presented with a bottle of wine. These men could never be traced. Derues requested the carpenter's wife to allow the chest to remain in the large workshop, saying he had forgotten something at his own house, and would return to fetch it in three hours. But, instead of a few hours, he left it for two whole days—why, one does not know, but it may be supposed that he wanted the time to dig a trench in a sort of vault under the staircase leading to the cellar in the rue de la Mortellerie. Whatever the cause, the delay might have been fatal, and did occasion an unforeseen encounter which nearly betrayed him. But of all the actors in this scene he alone knew the real danger he incurred, and his coolness never deserted him for a moment.

The third day, as he walked alongside the hand-cart on which the chest was being conveyed, he was accosted at Saint Germain l'Auxerrois by a creditor who had obtained a writ of execution against him, and at the imperative sign made by this man the porter stopped. The creditor attacked Derues

violently, reproaching him for his bad faith in language which was both energetic and uncomplimentary; to which the latter replied in as conciliatory a manner as he could assume. But it was impossible to silence the enemy, and an increasing crowd of idlers began to assemble round them.

"When will you pay me?" demanded the creditor. "I have an execution against you. What is there in that box? Valuables which you cart away secretly, in order to laugh at my just claims, as you did two years ago?"

Derues shuddered all over; he exhausted himself in protestations; but the other, almost beside himself, continued to shout.

"Oh!" he said, turning to the crowd, "all these tricks and grimaces and signs of the cross are no good. I must have my money, and as I know what his promises are worth, I will pay myself! Come, you knave, make haste. Tell me what there is in that box; open it, or I will fetch the police."

The crowd was divided between the creditor and debtor, and possibly a free fight would have begun, but the general attention was distracted by the arrival of another spectator. A voice heard above all the tumult caused a score of heads to turn, it was the voice of a woman crying—

"*The abominable history of Leroi de Valine, condemned to death at the age of sixteen for having poisoned his entire family!*"

Continually crying her wares, the drunken, staggering woman approached the crowd, and striking out right and left with fists and elbows, forced her way to Derues.

"Ah! ah!" said she, after looking him well over, "is it you, my gossip Derues! Have you again a little affair on hand like the one when you set fire to your shop in the rue Saint-Victor?"

Derues recognised the hawker who had abused him on the threshold of his shop some years previously, and whom he had never seen since. "Yes, yes," she continued, "you had better look at me with your little round cat's eyes. Are you going to say you don't know me?"

Derues appealed to his creditor. "You see," he said, "to what insults you are exposing me. I do not know this woman who abuses me."

"What!—you don't know me! You who accused me of being a thief! But luckily the Maniffets have been known in Paris as honest people for generations, while as for you——"

"Sir," said Derues, "this case contains valuable wine which I am commissioned to sell. To-morrow I shall receive the money for it; to-morrow, in the course of the day, I will pay what I owe you. But I am waited for now, do not in Heaven's name detain me longer, and thus deprive me of the means of paying at all."

"Don't believe him, my good man," said the hawker; "lying comes natural to him always."

"Sir, I promise on my oath you shall be paid to-morrow; you had better trust the word of an honest man rather than the ravings of a drunken woman."

The creditor still hesitated, but another person now spoke in Derues' favour; it was the carpenter Mouchy, who had inquired the cause of the quarrel.

"For God's sake," he exclaimed, "let the gentleman go on. That chest came from my workshop, and I know there is wine inside it; he told my wife so two days ago."

"Will you be surety for me, my friend?" asked Derues.

"Certainly I will; I have not known you for ten years in order to leave you in trouble and refuse to answer for you. What, the devil! are respectable people to be stopped like this in a public place? Come, sir, believe his word, as I do."

After some more discussion, the porter was at last allowed to proceed with his hand-cart. The hawker wanted to interfere, but Mouchy warned her off and ordered her to be silent. "Ah, bah!" she cried; "what does it matter to me? Let him sell his wine if he can; I shall not drink any on his premises. This is the second time he has found a surety to my knowledge; the beggar must have some special secret for encouraging the growth of fools. Good-bye, gossip Derues; you know I shall be selling your history some day. Meanwhile——

"*The abominable history of Leroi de Valine, condemned to death at the age of sixteen for having poisoned his entire family!*"

Whilst she amused the people by her grimaces and grotesque gestures, and while Mouchy held forth to some of them, Derues made his escape. Several times between Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois and the rue de la Mortellerie he nearly fainted, and was obliged to stop. While the danger lasted, he had had sufficient self-control to confront it coolly, but now that he calculated the depth of the abyss which for a moment had opened beneath his feet, dizziness laid hold on him.

Other precautions now became necessary. His real name had been mentioned before the commissionaire, and the widow Masson, who owned the cellar, only knew him as Ducoudray. He went on in front, asked for the keys, which till then had been left with her, and the chest was got downstairs without any awkward questions. Only the porter seemed astonished that this supposed wine, which was to be sold immediately, should be put in such a place, and asked if he might come the next day and move it again. Derues replied that someone was coming for it that very day. This question, and the disgraceful scene which the man had witnessed, made it necessary to get rid of him without letting him see the pit dug under the staircase. Derues tried to drag the chest towards the hole, but all his strength was insufficient to move it. He uttered terrible imprecations when he recognised his own weakness, and saw that he would be obliged to bring another stranger, an informer perhaps, into this charnel-house, where, as yet, nothing betrayed his crime. No sooner escaped from one peril than he encountered another, and already he had to struggle against his own deeds. He measured the length of the trench, it was too short. Derues went out and repaired to the place where he had hired the labourer who had dug it out, but he could not find the man, whom he had only seen once, and whose name he did not know. Two whole days were spent in this fruitless search, but on the third, as he was wandering on one of the quays at the time labourers were to be found there, a mason, thinking he was looking for someone, inquired what

he wanted. Derues looked well at the man, and concluding from his appearance that he was probably rather simple-minded, asked—

"Would you like to earn a crown of three livres by an easy job?"

"What a question, master!" answered the mason. "Work is so scarce that I am going back into the country this very evening."

"Very well! Bring your tools, spade, and pickaxe, and follow me."

They both went down to the cellar, and the mason was ordered to dig out the pit till it was five and a half feet deep. While the man worked, Derues sat beside the chest and read. When it was half done, the mason stopped for breath, and leaning on his spade, inquired why he wanted a trench of such a depth. Derues, who had probably foreseen the question, answered at once, without being disconcerted—

"I want to bury some bottled wine which is contained in this case."

"Wine!" said the other. "Ah! you are laughing at me, because you think I look a fool! I never yet heard of such a recipe for improving wine."

"Where do you come from?"

"D'Alençon."

"Cider drinker! You were brought up in Normandy, that is clear. Well, you can learn from me, Jean-Baptiste Ducoudray, a wine grower of Tours, and a wine merchant for the last ten years, that new wine thus buried for a year acquires the quality and characteristics of the oldest brands."

"It is possible," said the mason, again taking his spade, "but all the same it seems a little odd to me."

When he had finished, Derues asked him to help to drag the chest alongside the trench, so that it might be easier to take out the bottles and arrange them. The mason agreed, but when he moved the chest the fœtid odour which proceeded from it made him draw back, declaring that a smell such as that could not possibly proceed from wine.

Derues tried to persuade him that the smell came from drains under the cellar, the pipe of which could be seen. It appeared to satisfy him, and he again took hold of the chest, but immediately let it go again, and said positively that he could not execute Derues' orders, being convinced that the chest must contain a decomposing corpse. Then Derues threw himself at the man's feet and acknowledged that it was the dead body of a woman who had unfortunately lodged in his house, and who had died there suddenly from an unknown malady, and that, dreading lest he should be accused of having murdered her, he had decided to conceal the death and bury her here.

The mason listened, alarmed at this confidence, and not knowing whether to believe it or not. Derues sobbed and wept at his feet, beat his breast and tore out his hair, calling on God and the saints as witnesses of his good faith and his innocence. He showed the book he was reading while the mason excavated: it was the *Seven Penitential Psalms*. "How unfortunate I am!" he cried. "This woman died in my house, I assure you—died suddenly, before I could call a doctor. I was alone; I might have been accused, imprisoned, perhaps condemned for a crime I did not commit. Do not ruin me! You leave Paris to-night, you need not be uneasy; no one would know that I employed you, if this unhappy affair should ever be discovered. I do not know your name, I do not wish to know it, and I tell you mine, it is Ducoudray. I give myself up to you, but have some pity!—if not for me, yet for my wife and my two little children—for these poor creatures whose only support I am!"

Seeing that the mason was touched, Derues opened the chest.

"Look," he said, "examine the body of this woman, does it show any mark of violent death? My God!" he continued, joining his hands and in tones of despairing agony,—"my God, Thou who readest all hearts, and who knowest my innocence, canst Thou not ordain a miracle to save an honest man? Wilt Thou not command this dead body to bear witness for me?"

The mason was stupefied by this flow of language. Unable to restrain his tears, he promised to keep silence, persuaded that Derues was innocent, and that appearances only were against him. The latter, moreover, did not neglect other means of persuasion; he handed the mason two gold pieces, and between them they buried the body of Madame de Lamotte.

However extraordinary this fact, which might easily be supposed imaginary, may appear, it certainly happened. In the examination at his trial Derues himself revealed it, repeating the story which had satisfied the mason. He believed that this man had denounced him: he was mistaken, for this confidant of his crime, who might have been the first to put justice on his track, never reappeared, and but for Derues' acknowledgment his existence would have remained unknown.

This first deed accomplished, another victim was already appointed. Trembling at first as to the consequences of his forced confession, Derues waited some days, paying, however, his creditor as promised. He redoubles his demonstrations of piety, he casts a furtive glance on everyone he meets, seeking for some expression of distrust. But no one avoids him, or points him out with a raised finger, or whispers on seeing him; everywhere he encounters the customary expression of good-will. Nothing has changed; suspicion passes over his head without alighting there. He is reassured, and resumes his work. Moreover, had he wished to remain passive, he could not have done so; he was now compelled to follow that fatal law of crime which demands that blood must be effaced with blood, and which is compelled to appeal again to death in order to stifle the accusing voice already issuing from the tomb.

Edouard de Lamotte, loving his mother as much as she loved him, became uneasy at receiving no visits, and was astonished at this sudden indifference. Derues wrote to him as follows:—

"I have at length some good news for you, my dear boy, but you must not tell your mother I have betrayed her secret; she would scold me, because she is planning a surprise for you,

and the various steps and care necessary in arranging this important matter have caused her absence. You were to know nothing until the 11th or 12th of this month, but now that all is settled, I should blame myself if I prolonged the uncertainty in which you have been left, only you must promise me to look as much astonished as possible. Your mother, who only lives for you, is going to present you with the greatest gift a youth of your age can receive—that of liberty. Yes, dear boy, we thought we had discovered that you have no very keen taste for study, and that a secluded life will suit neither your character nor your health. In saying this I utter no reproach, for every man is born with his own decided tastes, and the way to success and happiness is—often—to allow him to follow these instincts. We have had long discussions on this subject—your mother and I—and we have thought much about your future; she has at last come to a decision, and for the last ten days has been at Versailles, endeavouring to obtain your admission as a royal page. Here is the mystery, this is the reason which has kept her from you, and as she knew you would hear it with delight, she wished to have the pleasure of telling you herself. Therefore, once again, when you see her, which will be very soon, do not let her see I have told you; appear to be greatly surprised. It is true that I am asking you to tell a lie, but it is a very innocent one, and its good intention will counteract its sinfulness—may God grant we never have worse upon our consciences! Thus, instead of lessons and the solemn precepts of your tutors, instead of a monotonous school-life, you are going to enjoy your liberty; also the pleasures of the court and the world. All that rather alarms me, and I ought to confess that I at first opposed this plan. I begged your mother to reflect, to consider that in this new existence you would run great risk of losing the religious feeling which inspires you, and which I have had the happiness, during my sojourn at Buisson-Souef, of further developing in your mind. I still recall with emotion your fervid and sincere aspirations towards the Creator when you approached the Sacred Table for the first time, and when, kneeling beside you, and envying the purity of heart

and innocence of soul which appeared to animate your countenance as with a divine radiance, I besought God that, in default of my own virtue, the love for heavenly Truth with which I have inspired you might be reckoned to my account. Your piety is my work, Edouard, and I defended it against your mother's plans; but she replied that in every career a man is master of his own good or evil actions; and as I have no authority over you, and friendship only gives me the right to advise, I must give way. If this be your vocation, then follow it.

"My occupations are so numerous (I have to collect from different sources this hundred thousand livres intended to defray the greater part of the Buisson purchase) that I have not a moment in which to come and see you this week. Spend the time in reflection, and write to me fully what you think about this plan. If, like me, you feel any scruples, you must tell them to your mother, who decidedly wants only to make you happy. Speak to me freely, openly. It is arranged that I am to fetch you on the 11th of this month, and escort you to Versailles, where Madame de Lamotte will be waiting to receive you with the utmost tenderness. Adieu, dear boy; write to me. Your father knows nothing as yet; his consent will be asked after your decision."

The answer to this letter did not have to be waited for: it was such as Derues expected; the lad accepted joyfully. The answer was, for the murderer, an arranged plea of defence, a proof which, in a given case, might link the present with the past.

On the morning of February 11th, Shrove Tuesday, he went to fetch the young de Lamotte from his school, telling the master that he was desired by the youth's mother to conduct him to Versailles. But, instead, he took him to his own house, saying that he had a letter from Madame de Lamotte asking them not to come till the next day; so they started on Ash Wednesday, Edouard having breakfasted on chocolate. Arrived at Versailles, they stopped at the Fleur-de-lys inn,

but there the sickness which the boy had complained of during the journey became very serious, and the innkeeper, having young children, and believing that he recognised symptoms of smallpox, which just then was ravaging Versailles, refused to receive them, saying he had no vacant room. This might have disconcerted anyone but Derues, but his audacity, activity, and resource seemed to increase with each fresh obstacle. Leaving Edouard in a room on the ground floor which had no communication with the rest of the inn, he went at once to look for lodgings, and hastily explored the town. After a fruitless search, he found at last, at the junction of the rue Saint-Honoré with that of the Orangerie, a cooper named Martin, who had a furnished room to spare. This he hired at thirty sous per day for himself and his nephew, who had been taken suddenly ill, under the name of Beaupré. To avoid being questioned later, he informed the cooper in a few words that he was a doctor; that he had come to Versailles in order to place his nephew in one of the offices of the town; that in a few days the latter's mother would arrive to join him in seeing and making application to influential persons about the court, to whom he had letters of introduction. As soon as he had delivered this fable with all the appearance of truth with which he knew so well how to disguise his falsehoods, he went back to the young de Lamotte, who was already so exhausted that he was hardly able to drag himself as far as the cooper's house. He fainted on arrival, and was carried into the hired room, where Derues begged to be left alone with him, and only asked for certain beverages which he told the people how to prepare.

Whether it was that the strength of youth fought against the poison, or that Derues took pleasure in watching the sufferings of his victim, the agony of the poor lad was prolonged until the fourth day. The sickness continuing incessantly, he sent the cooper's wife for a medicine which he prepared and administered himself. It produced terrible pain, and Edouard's cries brought the cooper and his wife upstairs. They represented to Derues that he ought to call in a doctor and consult with him, but he refused decidedly, saying that a doctor hastily fetched might

prove to be an ignorant person with whom he could not agree, and that he could not allow one so dear to him to be prescribed for and nursed by anyone but himself.

"I know what the malady is," he continued, raising his eyes to heaven; "it is one that has to be concealed rather than acknowledged. Poor youth! whom I love as my own son, if God, touched by my tears and thy suffering, permits me to save thee, thy whole life will be too short for thy blessings and thy gratitude!" And as Madame Martin asked what this malady might be, he answered with hypocritical blushes—

"Do not ask, madame; there are things of which you do not know even the name."

At another time, Martin expressed his surprise that the young man's mother had not yet appeared, who, according to Derues, was to have met him at Versailles. He asked how she could know that they were lodging in his house, and if he should send to meet her at any place where she was likely to arrive.

"His mother," said Derues, looking compassionately at Edouard, who lay pale, motionless, and as if insensible,—"his mother! He calls for her incessantly. Ah! monsieur, some families are greatly to be pitied! My entreaties prevailed on her to decide on coming hither, but will she keep her promise? Do not ask me to tell you more; it is too painful to have to accuse a mother of having forgotten her duties in the presence of her son . . . there are secrets which ought not to be told . . . unhappy woman!"

Edouard moved, extended his arms, and repeated, "Mother! . . . mother!"

Derues hastened to his side and took his hands in his, as if to warm them.

"My mother!" the youth repeated. "Why have I not seen her? She was to have met me."

"You shall soon see her, dear boy; only keep quiet."

"But just now I thought she was dead."

"Dead!" cried Derues. "Drive away these sad thoughts. They are caused by the fever only."

"No! oh no! . . . I heard a secret voice which said, 'Thy mother is dead!' . . . And then I beheld a livid corpse before me. . . . It was she! . . . I knew her well! and she seemed to have suffered so much——"

"Dear boy, your mother is not dead. . . . My God! what terrible chimeras you conjure up! You will see her again, I assure you; she has arrived already. Is it not so, madame?" he asked, turning towards the Martins, who were both leaning against the foot of the bed, and signing to them to support this pious falsehood, in order to calm the young man. "Did she not arrive and come to his bedside and kiss him while he slept, and she will soon come again?"

"Yes, yes," said Madame Martin, wiping her eyes; "and she begged my husband and me to help your uncle to take great care of you——"

The youth moved again, and looking round him with a dazed expression, said, "My uncle——?"

"You had better go," said Derues in a whisper to the Martins. "I am afraid he is delirious again; I will prepare a draught, which will give him a little rest and sleep."

"Adieu, then, adieu," answered Madame Martin; "and may Heaven bless you for the care you bestow on this poor young man!"

On Friday evening violent vomiting appeared to have benefited the sufferer. He had rejected most of the poison, and had a fairly quiet night. But on the Saturday morning Derues sent the cooper's little girl to buy more medicine, which he prepared himself, like the first. The day was horrible, and about six in the evening, seeing his victim was at the last gasp, he opened a little window overlooking the shop and summoned the cooper, requesting him to go at once for a priest. When the latter arrived he found Derues in tears, kneeling at the dying boy's bedside. And now, by the light of two tapers placed on a table, flanking the holy water-stoup, there began what on one side was an abominable and sacrilegious comedy, a disgraceful parody of that which Christians consider most sacred and most dear; on the other, a pious

and consoling ceremony. The cooper and his wife, their eyes bathed in tears, knelt in the middle of the room, murmuring such prayers as they could remember. Derues gave up his place to the priest, but as Edouard did not answer the latter's questions, he approached the bed, and bending over the sufferer, exhorted him to confession.

"Dear boy," he said, "take courage; your sufferings here will be counted to you above: God will weigh them in the scales of His infinite mercy. Listen to the words of His holy minister, cast your sins into His bosom, and obtain from Him forgiveness for your faults."

"I am in such terrible pain!" cried Edouard. "Water! water! Extinguish the fire which consumes me!"

A violent fit came on, succeeded by exhaustion and the death-rattle. Derues fell on his knees, and the priest administered extreme unction. There was then a moment of absolute silence, more impressive than cries and sobs. The priest collected himself for a moment, crossed himself, and began to pray. Derues also crossed himself, and repeated in a low voice, apparently choked by grief—

"*Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who was poured out upon thee.*"

The youth struggled in his bed, and a convulsive movement agitated his limbs. Derues continued—

"*When thy soul departs from this body may it be admitted to the holy Mountain of Sion, to the Heavenly Jerusalem, to the numerous company of Angels, and to the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven*——"

"Mother! . . . my mother!" cried Edouard. Derues resumed—

"*Let God arise, and let the Powers of Darkness be dispersed! let the Spirits of Evil, who reign over the air, be put to flight; let them not dare to attack a soul redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.*"

"*Amen*," responded the priest and the Martins.

There was another silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of Derues. The priest again crossed himself and took up the prayer.

"*We beseech Thee, O beloved and only Son of God, by the merits of Thy sacred Passion, Thy Cross and Thy Death, to deliver this Thy servant from the pains of Hell, and to lead him to that happy place whither Thou didst vouchsafe to lead the thief, who, with Thee, was bound upon the Cross: Thou, who art God, living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Ghost.*"

"*Amen,*" repeated those present. Derues now took up the prayer, and his voice mingled with the dying gasps of the sufferer.

"*And there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened*——"

"My God! . . . my God! . . . what have I done, that I should suffer thus?"

"*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani! My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"

"I am dying! . . . Water! water!"

Madame Martin rose, and supporting Edouard on the pillow, gave him a few spoonsful of liquid. Derues continued, more slowly—

"*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar; and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished, and having cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit, and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.*"

The dying lips moved, but could no longer articulate. The last convulsive movements relaxed, the head fell on the breast.

"*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord,*" said the priest;

"*For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified,*" responded Derues.

"*Deliver not unto savage beasts the souls of those who praise Thee*";

"*And forget not for ever the souls of Thy poor.*"

Then, together—

"*To Thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of this Thy servant, that, being dead to the world, he may live to Thee: and the sins he hath committed through the frailty of his mortal nature, do Thou, in Thy most merciful goodness, forgive and wash away. Amen.*"

After which all present sprinkled holy water on the body.

When the priest had retired, shown out by Madame Martin, Derues said to her husband—

"This unfortunate young man has died without the consolation of beholding his mother. . . . His last thought was for her. . . . There now remains the last duty, a very painful one to accomplish, but my poor nephew imposed it on me. A few hours ago, feeling that his end was near, he asked me, as a last mark of friendship, not to entrust these final duties to the hands of strangers."

While he applied himself to the necessary work in presence of the cooper, who was much affected by the sight of such sincere and profound affliction, Derues added, sighing—

"I shall always grieve for this dear boy. Alas! that evil living should have caused his early death! I knew nothing till too late. My poor nephew suffered from a terrible disease, and this being neglected, has caused his death. Bad company has been his ruin, and his mother is much to blame. May God have mercy on him!"

When he had finished laying out the body, he threw some little packets into the fire which he professed to have found in the youth's pockets, telling Martin, in order to support this assertion, that they contained drugs suitable to this disgraceful malady.

He spent the night in the room with the corpse, as he had done in the case of Madame de Lamotte, and the next day, Sunday, he sent Martin to the parish church of St. Louis, to arrange for a funeral of the simplest kind; telling him to fill up the certificate in the name of Beaupré, born at Commercy, in Lorraine. He declined himself either to go to the church or to appear at the funeral, saying that his grief was too great.

Martin, returning from the funeral, found him engaged in prayer. Derues gave him the dead youth's clothes and departed, leaving some money to be given to the poor of the parish, and for masses to be said for the repose of the soul of the dead.

He arrived at home in the evening, found his wife entertaining some friends; and told them he had just come from Chartres, where he had been summoned on business. Everyone noticed his unusual air of satisfaction, and he sang several songs during supper.

Having accomplished these two crimes, Derues did not remain idle. When the murderer's part of his nature was at rest, the thief reappeared. His extreme avarice now made him regret the expense caused by the deaths of Madame de Lamotte and her son, and he wished to recoup himself. Two days after his return from Versailles, he ventured to present himself at Edouard's school. He told the master that he had received a letter from Madame de Lamotte, saying that she wished to keep her son, and asking him to obtain Edouard's belongings. The schoolmaster's wife, who was present, replied that that could not be; that Monsieur de Lamotte would have known of his wife's intention; that she would not have taken such a step without consulting him; and that only the evening before, they had received a present of game from Buisson-Souef, with a letter in which Monsieur de Lamotte entreated them to take great care of his son.

"If what you say is true," she continued, "Madame de Lamotte is no doubt acting on your advice in taking away her son. But I will write to Buisson."

"You had better not do anything in the matter," said Derues, turning to the schoolmaster. "It is quite possible that Monsieur de Lamotte does not know. I am aware that his wife does not always consult him. She is at Versailles, where I took Edouard to her, and I will inform her of your objection."

To ensure impunity for these murders, Derues had resolved on the death of Monsieur de Lamotte; but before executing this last crime, he wished for some proof of the recent pretended

agreements between himself and Madame de Lamotte. He would not wait for the disappearance of the whole family before presenting himself as the lawful proprietor of Buisson-Souef. Prudence required him to shelter himself behind a deed which should have been executed by that lady. On February 27th he appeared at the office of Madame de Lamotte's lawyer in the rue du Paon, and, with all the persuasion of an artful tongue, demanded the power of attorney on that lady's behalf, saying that he had, by private contract, just paid a hundred thousand livres on the total amount of purchase, which money was now deposited with a notary. The lawyer, much astonished that an affair of such importance should have been arranged without any reference to himself, refused to give up the deed to anyone but Monsieur or Madame de Lamotte, and inquired why the latter did not appear herself. Derues replied that she was at Versailles, and that he was to send the deed to her there. He repeated his request and the lawyer his refusal, until Derues retired, saying he would find means to compel him to give up the deed. He actually did, the same day, present a petition to the civil authority, in which Cyrano Derues de Bury sets forth arrangements, made with Madame de Lamotte, founded on the deed given by her husband, and requires permission to seize and withdraw said deed from the custody in which it remains at present. The petition is granted. The lawyer objects that he can only give up the deed to either Monsieur or Madame de Lamotte, unless he be otherwise ordered. Derues has the effrontery to again appeal to the civil authority, but, for the reasons given by that public officer, the affair is adjourned.

These two futile efforts might have compromised Derues had they been heard of at Buisson-Souef; but everything seemed to conspire in the criminal's favour: neither the schoolmaster's wife nor the lawyer thought of writing to Monsieur de Lamotte. The latter, as yet unsuspecting, was tormented by other anxieties, and kept at home by illness.

In these days, distance is shortened, and one can travel from Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens to Paris in a few hours. This was

not the case in 1777, when private industry and activity, stifled by routine and privilege, had not yet experienced the need of providing the means for rapid communication. Half a day was required to go from the capital to Versailles; a journey of twenty leagues required at least two days and a night, and bristled with obstacles and delays of all kinds. These difficulties of transport, still greater during bad weather, and a long and serious attack of gout, explain why Monsieur de Lamotte, who was so ready to take alarm, had remained separated from his wife from the middle of December to the end of February. He had received reassuring letters from her, written at first with freedom and simplicity; but he thought he noticed a gradual change in the later ones, which appeared to proceed more from the mind than the heart. A style which aimed at being natural was interspersed with unnecessary expressions of affection, unusual between married people well assured of their mutual love. Monsieur de Lamotte observed and exaggerated these peculiarities, and though endeavouring to persuade himself that he was mistaken, he could not forget them, or regain his usual tranquillity. Being somewhat ashamed of his anxiety, he kept his fears to himself.

One morning, as he was sunk in a large arm-chair by the fire, his sitting-room door opened, and the curé entered, who was surprised by his despondent, sad, and pale appearance. "What is the matter?" he inquired. "Have you had an extra bad night?"

"Yes," answered Monsieur de Lamotte.

"Well, have you any news from Paris?"

"Nothing for a whole week: it is odd, is it not?"

"I am always hoping that this sale may fall through; it drags on for so very long; and I believe that Monsieur Derues, in spite of what your wife wrote a month ago, has not as much money as he pretends to have. Do you know that it is said that Monsieur Despeignes-Duplessis, Madame Derues' relative, whose money they inherited, was assassinated?"

"Where did you hear that?"

"It is a common report in the country, and was brought here by a man who came recently from Beauvais."

"Have the murderers been discovered?"

"Apparently not; justice seems unable to discover anything at all."

Monsieur de Lamotte hung his head, and his countenance assumed an expression of painful thought, as though this news affected him personally.

"Frankly," resumed the curé, "I believe you will remain Seigneur du Buisson-Souef, and that I shall be spared the pain of writing another name over your seat in the church of Villeneuve."

"The affair must be settled in a few days, for I can wait no longer: if the purchaser be not Monsieur Derues, it will have to be someone else. What makes you think he is short of money?"

"Oh! oh!" said the curé, "a man who has money either pays his debts, or is a cheat. Now Heaven preserve me from suspecting Monsieur Derues' honesty!"

"What do you know about him?"

"Do you remember Brother Marchois of the Camaldulians, who came to see me last spring, and who was here the day Monsieur Derues arrived, with your wife and Edouard?"

"Perfectly. Well?"

"Well, I happened to tell him in one of my letters that Monsieur Derues had become the purchaser of Buisson-Souef, and that I believed the arrangements were concluded. Thereupon Brother Marchois wrote asking me to remind him that he owes them a sum of eight hundred livres, and that, so far, they have not seen a penny of it."

"Ah!" said Monsieur de Lamotte, "perhaps I should have done better not to let myself be deluded by his fine promises. He certainly has honey on his tongue, and when once one begins to listen to him, one can't help doing what he wants. All the same, I had rather have had to deal with someone else."

"And is it this which worries you, and makes you seem so anxious?"

"This and other things."

"What, then?"

"I am really ashamed to own it, but I am as credulous and timid as any old woman. Now do not laugh at me too much. Do you believe in dreams?"

"Monsieur," said the curé, smiling, "you should never ask a coward whether he is afraid, you only risk his telling a lie. He will say 'No,' but he means 'Yes.'"

"And are you a coward, my father?"

"A little. I don't precisely believe all the nursery tales, or in the favourable or unfavourable meaning of some object seen during our sleep, but——"

A sound of steps interrupted them, a servant entered, announcing Monsieur Derues.

On hearing the name, Monsieur de Lamotte felt troubled in spite of himself, but, overcoming the impression, he rose to meet the visitor.

"You had better stay," he said to the curé, who was also rising to take leave. "Stay; we have probably nothing to say which cannot be said before you."

Derues entered the room, and, after the usual compliments, sat down by the fire, opposite Monsieur de Lamotte.

"You did not expect me," he said, "and I ought to apologise for surprising you thus."

"Give me some news of my wife," asked Monsieur de Lamotte anxiously.

"She has never been better. Your son is also in perfect health."

"But why are you alone? Why does not Marie accompany you? It is ten weeks since she went to Paris."

"She has not yet quite finished the business with which you entrusted her. Perhaps I am partly the cause of this long absence, but one cannot transact business as quickly as one would wish. But you have no doubt heard from her, that all is finished, or nearly so, between us. We have drawn up a second private contract, which annuls the former agreement, and I have paid over a sum of one hundred thousand livres."

"I do not comprehend," said Monsieur de Lamotte. "What can induce my wife not to inform me of this?"

"You did not know?"

"I know nothing. I was wondering just now with Monsieur le curé why I did not hear from her."

"Madame de Lamotte was going to write to you, and I do not know what can have hindered her."

"When did you leave her?"

"Several days ago. I have not been at Paris; I am returning from Chartres. I believed you were informed of everything."

Monsieur de Lamotte remained silent for some moments. Then, fixing his eyes upon Derues' immovable countenance, he said, with some emotion—

"You are a husband and father, sir; in the name of this double and sacred affection which is not unknown to you, do not hide anything from me. I fear some misfortune has happened to my wife which you are concealing."

Derues' physiognomy expressed nothing but a perfectly natural astonishment.

"What can have suggested such ideas to you, dear sir?" In saying this he glanced at the curé, wishing to ascertain if this distrust was Monsieur de Lamotte's own idea, or had been suggested to him. The movement was so rapid that neither of the others observed it. Like all knaves, obliged by their actions to be continually on the watch, Derues possessed to a remarkable extent the art of seeing all around him without appearing to observe anything in particular. He decided that as yet he had only to combat a suspicion unfounded on proof, and he waited till he should be attacked more seriously.

"I do not know," he said, "what may have happened during my absence; pray explain yourself, for you are making me share your disquietude."

"Yes, I am exceedingly anxious; I entreat you, tell me the whole truth. Explain this silence, and this absence prolonged beyond all expectation. You finished your business with Madame de Lamotte several days ago: once again, why did she not write? There is no letter, either from her or my son! To-morrow I shall send someone to Paris."

"Good heavens!" answered Derues, "is there nothing but

an accident which could cause this delay? . . . Well, then," he continued, with the embarrassed look of a man compelled to betray a confidence,—"well, then, I see that in order to reassure you, I shall have to give up a secret entrusted to me."

He then told Monsieur de Lamotte that his wife was no longer at Paris, but at Versailles, where she was endeavouring to obtain an important and lucrative appointment, and that, if she had left him in ignorance of her efforts in this direction, it was only to give him an agreeable surprise. He added that she had removed her son from the school, and hoped to place him either in the riding school or amongst the royal pages. To prove his words, he opened his paper-case, and produced the letter written by Edouard in answer to the one quoted above.

All this was related so simply, and with such an appearance of good faith, that the curé was quite convinced. And to Monsieur de Lamotte the plans attributed to his wife were not entirely improbable. Derues had learnt indirectly that such a career for Edouard had been actually under consideration. However, though Monsieur de Lamotte's entire ignorance prevented him from making any serious objection, his fears were not entirely at rest, but for the present he appeared satisfied with the explanation.

The curé resumed the conversation. "What you tell us ought to drive away gloomy ideas. Just now, when you were announced, Monsieur de Lamotte was confiding his troubles to me. I was as concerned as he was, and I could say nothing to help him; never did visitor arrive more *à propos*. Well, my friend, what now remains of your vain terrors? What was it you were saying just as Monsieur Derues arrived? . . . Ah! we were discussing dreams, you asked if I believed in them."

Monsieur de Lamotte, who had sunk back in his easy-chair and seemed lost in his reflections, started on hearing these words. He raised his head and looked again at Derues. But the latter had had time to note the impression produced by the curé's remark, and this renewed examination did not disturb him.

"Yes," said Monsieur de Lamotte, "I had asked that question."

"And I was going to answer that there are certain secret warnings which can be received by the soul long before they are intelligible to the bodily senses—revelations not understood at first, but which later connect themselves with realities of which they are in some way the precursors. Do you agree with me, Monsieur Derues?"

"I have no opinion on such a subject, and must leave the discussion to more learned people than myself. I do not know whether such apparitions really mean anything or not, and I have not sought to fathom these mysteries, thinking them outside the realm of human intelligence."

"Nevertheless," said the curé, "we are obliged to recognise their existence."

"Yes, but without either understanding or explaining them, like many other eternal truths. I follow the rule given in the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*: 'Beware, my son, of considering too curiously the things beyond thine intelligence.'"

"And I also submit, and avoid too curious consideration. But has not the soul knowledge of many wondrous things which we can yet neither see nor touch? I repeat, there are things which cannot be denied."

Derues listened attentively, continually on his guard; and afraid, he knew not why, of becoming entangled in this conversation, as in a trap. He carefully watched Monsieur de Lamotte, whose eyes never left him. The curé resumed—

"Here is an instance which I was bound to accept, seeing it happened to myself. I was then twenty, and my mother lived in the neighbourhood of Tours, whilst I was at the seminary of Montpellier. After several years of separation, I had obtained permission to go and see her. I wrote, telling her of this good news, and I received her answer—full of joy and tenderness. My brother and sister were to be informed, it was to be a family meeting, a real festivity; and I started with a light and joyous heart. My impatience was so great, that, having stopped for supper at a village inn some ten leagues from Tours, I would not wait till the next morning for the coach which went that way, but continued the journey on foot and walked all night.

It was a long and difficult road, but happiness redoubled my strength. About an hour after sunrise I saw distinctly the smoke and the village roofs, and I hurried on to surprise my family a little sooner. I never felt more active, more light-hearted and gay; everything seemed to smile before and around me. Turning a corner of the hedge, I met a peasant whom I recognised. All at once it seemed as if a veil spread over my sight, all my hopes and joy suddenly vanished, a funereal idea took possession of me, and I said, taking the hand of the man, who had not yet spoken—

"'My mother is dead, I am convinced my mother is dead!'

"He hung down his head and answered—

"'She is to be buried this morning!'

"Now whence came this revelation? I had seen no one, spoken to no one; a moment before I had no idea of it!"

Derues made a gesture of surprise. Monsieur de Lamotte put his hand to his eyes, and said to the curé—

"Your presentiments were true; mine, happily, are unfounded. But listen, and tell me if in the state of anxiety which oppressed me I had not good reason for alarm and for fearing some fatal misfortune."

His eyes again sought Derues. "Towards the middle of last night I at length fell asleep, but, interrupted every moment, this sleep was more a fatigue than a rest; I seemed to hear confused noises all round me. I saw brilliant lights which dazzled me, and then sank back into silence and darkness. Sometimes I heard someone weeping near my bed, again plaintive voices called to me out of the darkness. I stretched out my arms, but nothing met them, I fought with phantoms; at length a cold hand grasped mine and led me rapidly forward. Under a dark and damp vault a woman lay on the ground, bleeding, inanimate—it was my wife! At the same moment, a groan made me look round, and I beheld a man striking my son with a dagger. I cried out and awoke, bathed in cold perspiration, panting under this terrible vision. I was obliged to get up, walk about, and speak aloud, in order to convince myself it was only a dream. I tried to go to sleep again, but

the same visions still pursued me. I saw always the same man armed with two daggers streaming with blood; I heard always the cries of his two victims. When day came, I felt utterly broken, worn-out; and this morning, you, my father, could see by my despondency what an impression this awful night had made upon me."

During this recital Derues' calmness never gave way for a single moment, and the most skilful physiognomist could only have discovered an expression of incredulous curiosity on his countenance.

"Monsieur le curé's story," said he, "impressed me much; yours only brings back my uncertainty. It is less possible than ever to deliver any opinion on this serious question of dreams, since the second instance contradicts the first."

"It is true," answered the curé, "no possible conclusion can be drawn from two facts which contradict each other, and the best thing we can do is to choose a less dismal subject of conversation."

"Monsieur Derues," asked Monsieur de Lamotte, "if you are not too tired with your journey, shall we go and look at the last improvements I have made? It is now your affair to decide upon them, since I shall shortly be only your guest here."

"Just as I have been yours for long enough, and I trust you will often give me the opportunity of exercising hospitality in my turn. But you are ill, the day is cold and damp; if you do not care to go out, do not let me disturb you. Had you not better stay by the fire with Monsieur le curé? For me, Heaven be thanked! I require no assistance. I will look round the park, and come back presently to tell you what I think. Besides, we shall have plenty of time to talk about it. With your permission, I should like to stay two or three days."

"I shall be pleased if you will do so."

Derues went out, sufficiently uneasy in his mind, both on account of his reception of Monsieur de Lamotte's fears and of the manner in which the latter had watched him during the conversation. He walked quickly up and down the park.

"I have been foolish, perhaps; I have lost twelve or fifteen

days, and delayed stupidly from fear of not foreseeing everything. But then, how was I to imagine that this simple, easily deceived man would all at once become suspicious? What a strange dream! If I had not been on my guard, I might have been disconcerted. Come, come, I must try to disperse these ideas and give him something else to think about."

He stopped, and after a few minutes' consideration turned back towards the house.

As soon as he had left the room, Monsieur de Lamotte had bent over towards the curé, and had said—

"He did not show any emotion, did he?"

"None whatever."

"He did not start when I spoke of the man armed with those two daggers?"

"No. But put aside these ideas; you must see they are mistaken."

"I did not tell everything, my father: this murderer whom I saw in my dream—was Derues himself! I know as well as you that it must be a delusion, I saw as well as you did that he remained quite calm, but, in spite of myself, this terrible dream haunts me. . . . There, do not listen to me, do not let me talk about it; it only makes me blush for myself."

Whilst Derues remained at Buisson-Souef, Monsieur de Lamotte received several letters from his wife, some from Paris, some from Versailles. She remarked that her son and herself were perfectly well. The writing was so well imitated that no one could doubt their genuineness. However, Monsieur de Lamotte's suspicions continually increased, and he ended by making the curé share his fears. He also refused to go with Derues to Paris, in spite of the latter's entreaties. Derues, alarmed at the coldness shown him, left Buisson-Souef, saying that he intended to take possession about the middle of spring.

Monsieur de Lamotte was, in spite of himself, still detained by ill-health. But a new and inexplicable circumstance made him resolve to go to Paris and endeavour to clear up the mystery which appeared to surround his wife and son. He received an unsigned letter in unknown handwriting, and in which

Madame de Lamotte's reputation was attacked with a kind of would-be reticence, which hinted that she was an unfaithful wife and that in this lay the cause of her long absence. Her husband did not believe this anonymous denunciation, but the fate of the two beings dearest to him seemed shrouded in so much obscurity that he could delay no longer, and started for Paris.

His resolution not to accompany Derues had saved his life. The latter could not carry out his culminating crime at Buisson-Souef; it was only in Paris that his victims would disappear without his being called to account. Obliged to leave hold of his prey, he endeavoured to bewilder him in a labyrinth where all trace of truth might be lost. Already, as he had arranged beforehand, he had called calumny to his help, and prepared the audacious lie which was to vindicate himself should an accusation fall upon his head. He had hoped that Monsieur de Lamotte would fall defenceless into his hands; but now a careful examination of his position, showing the impossibility of avoiding an explanation had become inevitable, made him change all his plans, and compelled him to devise an infernal plot, so skilfully laid that it bid fair to defeat all human sagacity.

Monsieur de Lamotte arrived in Paris early in March. Chance decided that he should lodge in the rue de la Mortellerie, in a house not far from the one where his wife's body lay buried. He went to see Derues, hoping to surprise him, and determined to make him speak, but found he was not at home. Madame Derues, whether acting with the discretion of an accomplice or really ignorant of her husband's proceedings, could not say where he was likely to be found. She said that he told her nothing about his actions, and that Monsieur de Lamotte must have observed during their stay at Buisson (which was true) that she never questioned him, but obeyed his wishes in everything, and that he had now gone away without saying where he was going. She acknowledged that Madame de Lamotte had lodged with them for six weeks, and that she knew that lady had been at Versailles, but since then she had

heard nothing. All Monsieur de Lamotte's questions, his entreaties, prayers, or threats, obtained no other answer. He went to the lawyer in the rue de Paon, to the schoolmaster, and found the same uncertainty, the same ignorance. His wife and his son had gone to Versailles, there the clue ended which ought to guide his investigations. He went to this town; no one could give him any information, the very name of Lamotte was unknown. He returned to Paris, questioned and examined the people of the quarter, the proprietor of the Hôtel de France, where his wife had stayed on her former visit; at length, wearied with useless efforts, he implored help from Justice. Then his complaints ceased; he was advised to maintain a prudent silence, and to await Derues' return.

The latter thoroughly understood that, having failed to dissipate Monsieur de Lamotte's fears there was no longer an instant to lose, and that the pretended private contract of February 12th would not of itself prove the existence of Madame de Lamotte. This is how he employed the time spent by the unhappy husband in fruitless investigation.

On March 12th, a woman, her face hidden in the hood of her cloak, or "*Thérèse*," as it was then called, appeared in the office of Maître N——, a notary at Lyons. She gave her name as Marie-Françoise Pérffier, wife of Monsieur Saint-Faust de Lamotte, but separated, as to goods and estate, from him. She caused a deed to be drawn up, authorising her husband to receive the arrears of thirty thousand livres remaining from the price of the estate of Buisson-Souef, situated near Villeneuve-le-Roi-lez-Sens. The deed was drawn up and signed by Madame de Lamotte, by the notary, and one of his colleagues.

This woman was Derues. If we remember that he only arrived at Buisson February 28th, and remained there for some days, it becomes difficult to understand how at that period so long a journey as that from Paris to Lyons could have been accomplished with such rapidity. Fear must have given him wings. We will now explain what use he intended to make of it, and what fable, a masterpiece of cunning and of lies, he had invented.

On his arrival in Paris he found a summons to appear before the magistrate of police. He expected this, and appeared quite tranquilly, ready to answer any questions. Monsieur de Lamotte was present. It was a formal examination, and the magistrate first asked why he had left Paris.

"Monsieur," replied Derues, "I have nothing to hide, and none of my actions need fear the daylight, but before replying, I should like to understand my position. As a domiciled citizen I have a right to require this. Will you kindly inform me why I have been summoned to appear before you, whether on account of anything personal to myself, or simply to give information as to something which may be within my knowledge?"

"You are acquainted with this gentleman, and cannot therefore be ignorant of the cause of the present inquiry."

"I am, nevertheless, quite in ignorance of it."

"Be good enough to answer my question. Why did you leave Paris? And where have you been?"

"I was absent for business reasons."

"What business?"

"I shall say no more."

"Take care! you have incurred serious suspicions, and silence will not tend to clear you."

Derues hung down his head with an air of resignation; and Monsieur de Lamotte, seeing in this attitude a silent confession of crime, exclaimed, "Wretched man! what have you done with my wife and my son?"

"Your son!——" said Derues slowly and with peculiar emphasis. He again cast down his eyes.

The magistrate conducting the inquiry was struck by the expression of Derues' countenance and by this half answer, which appeared to hide a mystery and to aim at diverting attention by offering a bait to curiosity. He might have stopped Derues at the moment when he sought to plunge into a tortuous argument, and compelled him to answer with the same clearness and decision which distinguished Monsieur de Lamotte's question; but he reflected that the latter's inquiries,

unforeseen, hasty, and passionate, were perhaps more likely to disconcert a prepared defence than cooler and more skilful tactics. He therefore changed his plans, contenting himself for the moment with the part of an observer only, and watching a duel between two fairly matched antagonists.

"I require you to tell me what has become of them," repeated Monsieur de Lamotte. "I have been to Versailles, you assured me they were there."

"And I told you the truth, monsieur."

"No one has seen them, no one knows them; every trace is lost. Your Honour, this man must be compelled to answer, he must say what has become of my wife and son!"

"I excuse your anxiety, I understand your trouble, but why appeal to me? Why am I supposed to know what may have happened to them?"

"Because I confided them to your care."

"As a friend, yes, I agree. Yes, it is quite true that last December I received a letter from you informing me of the impending arrival of your wife and son. I received them in my own house, and showed them the same hospitality which I had received from you. I saw them both, your son often, your wife every day, until the day she left me to go to Versailles. Yes, I also took Edouard to his mother, who was negotiating an appointment for him. I have already told you all this, and I repeat it because it is the truth. You believed me then: why do you not believe me now? Why has what I say become strange and incredible? If your wife and your son have disappeared, am I responsible? Did you transmit your authority to me? And now, in what manner are you thus calling me to account? Is it to the friend who might have pitied, who might have aided your search, that you thus address yourself? Have you come to confide in me, to ask for advice, for consolation? No, you accuse me; very well! then I refuse to speak, because, having no proofs, you yet accuse an honest man; because your fears, whether real or imaginary, do not excuse you for casting, I know not what odious suspicions, on a blameless reputation, because I have the right to be offended. Monsieur,"

he continued, turning to the magistrate, "I believe you will appreciate my moderation, and will allow me to retire. If charges are brought against me, I am quite ready to meet them, and to show what they are really worth. I shall remain in Paris, I have now no business which requires my presence elsewhere."

He emphasised these last words, evidently intending to draw attention to them. It did not escape the magistrate, who inquired—

"What do you mean by that?"

"Nothing beyond my words, your Honour. Have I your permission to retire?"

"No, remain; you are pretending not to understand."

"I do not understand these insinuations so covertly made."

Monsieur de Lamotte rose, exclaiming—

"Insinuations! What more can I say to compel you to answer? My wife and son have disappeared. It is untrue that, as you pretend, they have been at Versailles. You deceived me at Buisson-Souef, just as you are deceiving me now, as you are endeavouring to deceive justice by inventing fresh lies. Where are they? What has become of them? I am tormented by all the fears possible to a husband and father; I imagine all the most terrible misfortunes, and I accuse you to your face of having caused their death! Is this sufficient, or do you still accuse me of covert insinuations?"

Derues turned to the magistrate. "Is this charge enough to place me in the position of a criminal if I do not give a satisfactory explanation?"

"Certainly; you should have thought of that sooner."

"Then," he continued, addressing Monsieur de Lamotte, "I understand you persist in this odious accusation?"

"I certainly persist in it."

"You have forgotten our friendship, broken all bonds between us: I am in your eyes only a miserable assassin? You consider my silence as guilty, you will ruin me if I do not speak?"

"It is true."

"There is still time for reflection; consider what you are doing; I will forget your insults and your anger. Your trouble is great enough without my reproaches being added to it. But you desire that I should speak, you desire it absolutely?"

"I do desire it."

"Very well, then; it shall be as you wish."

Derues surveyed Monsieur de Lamotte with a look which seemed to say, "I pity you." He then added, with a sigh—

"I am now ready to answer. Your Honour, will you have the kindness to resume my examination?"

Derues had succeeded in taking up an advantageous position. If he had begun by narrating the extraordinary romance he had invented, the least penetrating eye must have perceived its improbability, and one would have felt it required some support at every turn. But since he had resisted being forced to tell it, and apparently only ceded to Monsieur de Lamotte's violent persistency, the situation was changed; and this refusal to speak, coming from a man who thereby compromised his personal safety, took the semblance of generosity, and was likely to arouse the magistrate's curiosity and prepare his mind for unusual and mysterious revelations. This was exactly what Derues wanted, and he awaited the interrogation with calm and tranquillity.

"Why did you leave Paris?" the magistrate demanded a second time.

"I have already had the honour to inform you that important business necessitated my absence."

"But you refused to explain the nature of this business. Do you still persist in this refusal?"

"For the moment, yes. I will explain it later."

"Where have you been? Whence do you return?"

"I have been to Lyons, and have returned thence."

"What took you there?"

"I will tell you later."

"In the month of December last, Madame de Lamotte and her son came to Paris?"

"That is so."

"They both lodged in your house?"

"I have no reason to deny it."

"But neither she herself, nor Monsieur de Lamotte, had at first intended that she should accept a lodging in the house which you occcupied."

"That is quite true. We had important accounts to settle, and Madame de Lamotte told me afterwards that she feared some dispute on the question of money might arise between us—at least, that is the reason she gave me. She was mistaken, as the event proved, since I always intended to pay, and I have paid. But she may have had another reason which she preferred not to give."

"It was the distrust of this man which she felt," exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte. Derues answered only with a melancholy smile.

"Silence, monsieur," said the magistrate, "silence; do not interrupt." Then addressing Derues—

"Another motive? What motive do you suppose?"

"Possibly she preferred to be more free, and able to receive any visitor she wished."

"What do you mean?"

"It is only supposition on my part, I do not insist upon it."

"But the supposition appears to contain a hint injurious to Madame de Lamotte's reputation?"

"No, oh no!" replied Derues, after a moment's silence.

This sort of insinuation appeared strange to the magistrate, who resolved to try and force Derues to abandon these treacherous reticences behind which he sheltered himself. Again recommending silence to Monsieur de Lamotte, he continued to question Derues, not perceiving that he was only following the lead skilfully given by the latter, who drew him gradually on by withdrawing himself, and that all the time thus gained was an advantage to the accused.

"Well," said the magistrate, "whatever Madame de Lamotte's motives may have been, it ended in her coming to stay with you. How did you persuade her to take this step?"

"My wife accompanied her first to the Hôtel de France, and then to other hotels. I said no more than might be deemed allowable in a friend; I could not presume to persuade her against her will. When I returned home, I was surprised to find her there with her son. She could not find a disengaged room in any of the hotels she tried, and she then accepted my offer."

"What date was this?"

"Monday, the 16th of last December."

"And when did she leave your house?"

"On the 1st of February."

"The porter cannot remember having seen her go out on that day."

"That is possible. Madame de Lamotte went and came as her affairs required. She was known, and no more attention would be paid to her than to any other inmate."

"The porter also says that for several days before this date she was ill, and obliged to keep her room?"

"Yes, it was a slight indisposition, which had no results, so slight that it seemed unnecessary to call in a doctor. Madame de Lamotte appeared preoccupied and anxious. I think her mental attitude influenced her health."

"Did you escort her to Versailles?"

"No; I went there to see her later."

"What proof can you give of her having actually stayed there?"

"None whatever, unless it be a letter which I received from her."

"You told Monsieur de Lamotte that she was exerting herself to procure her son's admission either as a king's page or into the riding school. Now, no one at Versailles has seen this lady, or even heard of her."

"I only repeated what she told me."

"Where was she staying?"

"I do not know."

"What! she wrote to you, you went to see her, and yet you do not know where she was lodging?"

"That is so."

"But it is impossible."

"There are many things which would appear impossible if I were to relate them, but which are true, nevertheless."

"Explain yourself."

"I only received one letter from Madame de Lamotte, in which she spoke of her plans for Edouard, requesting me to send her her son on a day she fixed, and I told Edouard of her projects. Not being able to go to the school to see him, I wrote, asking if he would like to give up his studies and become a royal page. When I was last at Buisson-Souef, I showed his answer to Monsieur de Lamotte; it is here."

And he handed over a letter to the magistrate, who read it, and passing it on to Monsieur de Lamotte, inquired—

"Did you then, and do you now, recognise your son's handwriting?"

"Perfectly, monsieur."

"You took Edouard to Versailles?"

"I did."

"On what day?"

"February 11th, Shrove Tuesday. It is the only time I have been to Versailles. The contrary might be supposed; for I have allowed it to be understood that I have often seen Madame de Lamotte since she left my house, and was acquainted with all her actions, and that the former confidence and friendship still existed between us. In allowing this, I have acted a lie, and transgressed the habitual sincerity of my whole life."

This assertion produced a bad impression on the magistrate. Derues perceived it, and to avert evil consequences, hastened to add—

"My conduct can only be appreciated when it is known in entirety. I misunderstood the meaning of Madame de Lamotte's letter. She asked me to send her her son, I thought to oblige her by accompanying him, and not leaving him to go alone. So we travelled together, and arrived at Versailles about midday. As I got down from the coach I

saw Madame de Lamotte at the palace gate, and observed, to my astonishment, that my presence displeased her. She was not alone."

He stopped, although he had evidently reached the most interesting point of his story.

"Go on," said the magistrate; "why do you stop now?"

"Because what I have to say is so painful—not to me, who have to justify myself, but for others, that I hesitate."

"Go on."

"Will you then interrogate me, please?"

"Well, what happened in this interview?"

Derues appeared to collect himself for a moment, and then said with the air of a man who has decided on speaking out at last—

"Madame de Lamotte was not alone; she was attended by a gentleman whom I did not know, whom I never saw either at Buisson-Souef or in Paris, and whom I have never seen again since. I will ask you to allow me to recount everything, even to the smallest details. This man's face struck me at once, on account of a singular resemblance; he paid no attention to me at first, and I was able to examine him at leisure. His manners were those of a man belonging to the highest classes of society, and his dress indicated wealth. On seeing Edouard, he said to Madame de Lamotte—

"'So this is he?' and he then kissed him tenderly. This and the marks of undisguised pleasure which he evinced surprised me, and I looked at Madame de Lamotte, who then remarked with some asperity—

"'I did not expect to see you, Monsieur Derues. I had not asked you to accompany my son.'

"Edouard seemed quite as much surprised as I was. The stranger gave me a look of haughty annoyance, but seeing I did not avoid his glance his countenance assumed a more gentle expression, and Madame de Lamotte introduced him as a person who took great interest in Edouard."

"It is a whole tissue of imposture!" exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte.

"Allow me to finish," answered Derues. "I understand your doubts, and that you are not anxious to believe what I say, but I have been brought here by legal summons to tell the truth, and I am going to tell it. You can then weigh the two accusations in the balance, and choose between them. The reputation of an honourable man is as sacred, as important, as worthy of credit as the reputation of a woman, and I never heard that the virtue of the one was more fragile than that of the other."

Monsieur de Lamotte, thunderstruck by such a revelation, could not contain his impatience and indignation.

"This, then," he said, "is the explanation of an anonymous letter which I received, and of the injurious suggestions concerning my wife's honour which it contained; it was written to give an appearance of probability to this infamous legend. The whole thing is a disgraceful plot, and no doubt Monsieur Derues wrote the letter himself."

"I know nothing about it," said Derues unconcernedly, "and the explanation which you profess to find in it I should rather refer to something else I am going to mention. I did not know a secret warning had been sent to you: I now learn it from you, and I understand perfectly that such a letter may have been written. But that you have received such a warning ought surely to be a reason for listening patiently and not denouncing all I say as imposture."

While saying this Derues mentally constructed the fresh falsehood necessitated by the interruption, but no variation of countenance betrayed his thought. He had an air of dignity natural to his position. He saw that, in spite of clearheadedness and long practice in studying the most deceptive countenances, the magistrate so far had not scented any of his falsehoods, and was getting bewildered in the windings of this long narrative, through which Derues led him as he chose; and he resumed with confidence—

"You know that I made Monsieur de Lamotte's acquaintance more than a year ago, and I had reason to believe his friendship as sincere as my own. As a friend, I could not calmly

accept the suspicion which then entered my mind, nor could I conceal my surprise. Madame de Lamotte saw this, and understood from my looks that I was not satisfied with the explanation she wished me to accept. A glance of intelligence passed between her and her friend, who was still holding Edouard's hand. The day, though cold, was fine, and she proposed a walk in the park. I offered her my arm, and the stranger walked in front with Edouard. We had a short conversation, which has remained indelibly fixed in my memory.

"'Why did you come?' she inquired.

"I did not answer, but looked sternly at her, in order to discompose her. At length I said—

"'You should have written, madame, and warned me that my coming would be indiscreet.'

"She seemed much disconcerted, and exclaimed—

"'I am lost! I see you guess everything, and will tell my husband. I am an unhappy woman, and a sin once committed can never be erased from the pages of a woman's life! Listen, Monsieur Derues, listen, I implore you! You see this man, I shall not tell you who he is, I shall not give his name . . . but I loved him long ago; I should have been his wife, and had he not been compelled to leave France, I should have married no one else.'"

Monsieur de Lamotte started, and grew pale.

"What is the matter?" the magistrate inquired.

"Oh! this dastardly wretch is profiting by his knowledge of secrets which a long intimacy has enabled him to discover. Do not believe him, I entreat you, do not believe him!"

Derues resumed. "Madame de Lamotte continued: 'I saw him again sixteen years ago, always in hiding, always proscribed. To-day he reappears under a name which is not his own: he wishes to link my fate with his; he has insisted on seeing Edouard. But I shall escape him. I have invented this fiction of placing my son among the royal pages to account for my stay here. Do not contradict me, but help me; for a little time ago I met one of Monsieur de Lamotte's friends,

I am afraid he suspected something. Say you have seen me several times; as you have come, let it be known that you brought Edouard here. I shall return to Buisson as soon as possible, but will you go first, see my husband, satisfy him if he is anxious? I am in your hands; my honour, my reputation, my very life, are at your mercy; you can either ruin or help to save me. I may be guilty, but I am not corrupt. I have wept for my sin day after day, and I have already cruelly expiated it."

This execrable calumny was not related without frequent interruptions on the part of Monsieur de Lamotte. He was, however, obliged to own to himself that it was quite true that Marie Périer had really been promised to a man whom an unlucky affair had driven into exile, and whom he had supposed to be dead. This revelation, coming from Derues, who had the strongest interest in lying, by no means convinced him of his wife's dishonour, nor destroyed the feelings of a husband and father; but Derues was not speaking for him alone, and what appeared incredible to Monsieur de Lamotte might easily seem less improbable to the colder and less interested judgment of the magistrate.

"I was wrong," Derues continued, "in allowing myself to be touched by her tears, wrong in believing in her repentance, more wrong still in going to Buisson to satisfy her husband. But I only consented on conditions: Madame de Lamotte promised me to return shortly to Paris, vowing that her son should never know the truth, and that the rest of her life should be devoted to atoning for her sin by a boundless devotion. She then begged me to leave her, and told me she would write to me at Paris to fix the day of her return. This is what happened, and this is why I went to Buisson and gave my support to a lying fiction. With one word I might have destroyed the happiness of seventeen years. I did not wish to do so. I believed in the remorse; I believe in it still, in spite of all appearances; I have refused to speak this very day, and made every effort to prolong an illusion which I know it will be terrible to lose."

There was a moment of silence. This fable, so atrociously

ingenious, was simply and impressively narrated, and with an air of candour well contrived to impose on the magistrate, or, at least, to suggest grave doubts to his mind. Derues, with his usual cunning, had conformed his language to the quality of his listener. Any tricks, professions of piety, quotations from sacred books, so largely indulged in when he wished to bamboozle people of a lower class, would here have told against him. He knew when to abstain, and carried the art of deception far enough to be able to lay aside the appearance of hypocrisy. He had described all the circumstances without affectation, and if this unexpected accusation was wholly unproved, it yet rested on a possible fact, and did not appear absolutely incredible. The magistrate went through it all again, and made him repeat every detail, without being able to make him contradict himself or show the smallest embarrassment. While interrogating Derues, he kept his eyes fixed upon him; and this double examination being quite fruitless, only increased his perplexity. However, he never relaxed the incredulous severity of his demeanour, nor the imperative and threatening tone of his voice.

"You acknowledge having been at Lyons?" he asked.

"I have been there."

"At the beginning of this examination you said you would explain the reason of this journey later."

"I am ready to do so, for the journey is connected with the facts I have just narrated; it was caused by them."

"Explain it."

"I again ask permission to relate fully. I did not hear from Versailles: I began to fear Monsieur de Lamotte's anxiety would bring him to Paris. Bound by the promise I had made to his wife to avert all suspicion and to satisfy any doubts he might conceive, and, must I add, also remembering that it was important for me to inform him of our new arrangements, and of this payment of a hundred thousand livres——"

"That payment is assuredly fictitious," interrupted Monsieur de Lamotte; "we must have some proof of it."

"I will prove it presently," answered Derues. "So I went to

Buisson, as I have already told you. On my return I found a letter from Madame de Lamotte, a letter with a Paris stamp, which had arrived that morning. I was surprised that she should write, when actually in Paris; I opened the letter, and was still more surprised. I have not the letter with me, but I recollect the sense of it perfectly, if not the wording, and I can produce it if necessary. Madame de Lamotte was at Lyons with her son and this person whose name I do not know, and whom I do not care to mention before her husband. She had confided this letter to a person who was coming to Paris, and who was to bring it me; but this individual, whose name was Marquis, regretted that having to start again immediately, he was obliged to entrust it to the post. This is the sense of its contents. Madame de Lamotte wrote that she found herself obliged to follow this nameless person to Lyons; and she begged me to send her news of her husband and of the state of his affairs, but said not one single word of any probable return. I became very uneasy at the news of this clandestine departure. I had no security except a private contract annulling our first agreement on the payment of one hundred thousand livres, and that this was not a sufficient and regular receipt I knew, because the lawyer had already refused to surrender Monsieur de Lamotte's power of attorney. I thought over all the difficulties which this flight, which would have to be kept secret, was likely to produce, and I started for Lyons without writing or giving any notice of my intention. I had no information, I did not even know whether Madame de Lamotte was passing by another name, as at Versailles, but chance decreed that I met her the very day of my arrival. She was alone, and complained bitterly of her fate, saying she had been compelled to follow this individual to Lyons, but that very soon she would be free and would return to Paris. But I was struck by the uncertainty of her manner, and said I should not leave her without obtaining a deed in proof of our recent arrangements. She refused at first, saying it was unnecessary, as she would so soon return; but I insisted strongly. I told her I had already compromised myself by telling Monsieur

de Lamotte that she was at Versailles, endeavouring to procure an appointment for her son; that since she had been compelled to come to Lyons, the same person might take her elsewhere, so that she might disappear any day, might leave France without leaving any trace, without any written acknowledgment of her own dishonour; and that when all these falsehoods were discovered, I should appear in the light of an accomplice. I said also that, as she had unfortunately lodged in my house in Paris, and had requested me to remove her son from his school, explanations would be required from me, and perhaps I should be accused of this double disappearance. Finally, I declared that if she did not give me some proofs of her existence, willingly or unwillingly, I would go at once to a magistrate. My firmness made her reflect. 'My good Monsieur Derues,' she said, 'I ask your forgiveness for all the trouble I have caused you. I will give you this deed to-morrow, to-day it is too late; but come to this same place to-morrow, and you shall see me again.' I hesitated, I confess, to let her go. 'Ah,' she said, grasping my hands, 'do not suspect me of intending to deceive you! I swear that I will meet you here at four o'clock. It is enough that I have ruined myself, and perhaps my son, without also entangling you in my unhappy fate. Yes, you are right, this deed is important, necessary for you, and you shall have it. But do not show yourself here; if you were seen, I might not be able to do what I ought to do. To-morrow you shall see me again, I swear it. She then left me. The next day, the 12th March, I was exact at the rendezvous, and Madame de Lamotte arrived a moment later. She gave me a deed, authorising her husband to receive the arrears of thirty thousand livres remaining from the purchase-money of Buisson-Souef. I endeavoured again to express my opinion of her conduct; she listened in silence, as if my words affected her deeply. We were walking together, when she told me she had some business in a house we were passing, and asked me to wait for her. I waited more than an hour, and then discovered that this house, like many others in Lyons, had an exit in another street; and I understood that

Madame de Lamotte had escaped by this passage, and that I might wait in vain. Concluding that trying to follow her would be useless, and seeing also that any remonstrance would be made in vain, I returned to Paris, deciding to say nothing as yet, and to conceal the truth as long as possible. I still had hopes, and I did not count on being so soon called on to defend myself: I thought that when I had to speak, it would be as a friend, and not as an accused person. This, sir, is the explanation of my conduct, and I regret that this justification, so easy for myself, should be so cruelly painful for another. You have seen the efforts which I made to defer it."

Monsieur de Lamotte had heard this second part of Derues' recital with a more silent indignation, not that he admitted its probability, but he was confounded by this monstrous imposture, and, as it were, terror-stricken by such profound hypocrisy. His mind revolted at the idea of his wife being accused of adultery; but while he repelled this charge with decision, he saw the confirmation of his secret terrors and presentiments, and his heart sank within him at the prospect of exploring this abyss of iniquity. He was pale, gasping for breath, as though he himself had been the criminal, while scorching tears furrowed his cheeks. He tried to speak, but his voice failed; he wanted to fling back at Derues the names of traitor and assassin, and he was obliged to bear in silence the look of mingled grief and pity which the latter bestowed upon him.

The magistrate, calmer, and master of his emotions, but tolerably bewildered in this labyrinth of cleverly connected lies, thought it desirable to ask some further questions.

"How," said he, "did you obtain this sum of a hundred thousand livres which you say you paid over to Madame de Lamotte?"

"I have been engaged in business for several years, and have acquired some fortune."

"Nevertheless, you have postponed the obligation of making this payment several times, so that Monsieur de Lamotte had begun to feel uneasiness on the subject. This was the chief reason of his wife's coming to Paris."

"One sometimes experiences momentary difficulties, which presently disappear."

"You say you have a deed given you at Lyons by Madame de Lamotte, which you were to give to her husband?"

"It is here."

The magistrate examined the deed carefully, and noted the name of the lawyer in whose office it had been drawn up.

"You may go," he said at last.

"What!" exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte.

Derues stopped, but the magistrate signed to him to go, intimating, however, that he was on no account to leave Paris.

"But," said Monsieur de Lamotte, when they were alone, "this man is indeed guilty. My wife has not betrayed me! She!—forget her duties as a wife! she was virtue incarnate! Ah! I assure you these terrible calumnies are invented to conceal a double crime! I throw myself at your feet,—I implore your justice!——"

"Rise, monsieur. This is only a preliminary examination, and I confess that, so far, he comes well out of it, for imagination can hardly understand such a depth of deceit. I watched him closely the whole time, and I could discover no sign of alarm, no contradiction, in either face or language; if guilty, he must be the greatest hypocrite that ever existed. But I shall neglect nothing: if a criminal is allowed to flatter himself with impunity, he frequently forgets to be prudent, and I have seen many betray themselves when they thought they had nothing to fear. Patience, and trust to the justice of both God and man."

Several days passed, and Derues flattered himself the danger was over: his every action meanwhile was most carefully watched, but so that he remained unaware of the surveillance. A police officer named Mutel, distinguished for activity and intelligence beyond his fellows, was charged with collecting information and following any trail. All his bloodhounds were in action, and hunted Paris thoroughly, but could trace nothing bearing on the fate of Madame de Lamotte and her son. Mutel, however, soon discovered that in the rue Saint-

Victor, Derues had failed three successive times, that he had been pursued by numerous creditors, and been often near imprisonment for debt, and that in 1771 he had been publicly accused of incendiarism. He reported on these various circumstances, and then went himself to Derues' abode, where he obtained no results. Madame Derues declared that she knew nothing whatever, and the police, having vainly searched the whole house, had to retire. Derues himself was absent; when he returned he found another order to appear before the magistrate.

His first success had encouraged him. He appeared before the magistrate accompanied by a lawyer and full of confidence, complaining loudly that the police, in searching during his absence, had offended against the rights of a domiciled burgess, and ought to have awaited his return. Affecting a just indignation at Monsieur de Lamotte's conduct towards him, he presented a demand that the latter should be declared a calumniator, and should pay damages for the injury caused to his reputation. But this time his effrontery and audacity were of little avail, the magistrate easily detected him in flagrant lies. He declared at first that he had paid the hundred thousand livres with his own money, but when reminded of his various bankruptcies, the claims of his creditors, and the judgments obtained against him as an insolvent debtor, he made a complete *volte-face*, and declared he had borrowed the money from an advocate named Duclos, to whom he had given a bond in presence of a notary. In spite of all his protestations, the magistrate committed him to solitary confinement at Fort l'Évèque.

As yet, nothing was publicly known; but vague reports and gossip, carried from shop to shop, circulated among the people, and began to reach the higher classes of society. The infallible instinct which is aroused among the masses is truly marvellous; a great crime is committed, which seems at first likely to defeat justice, and the public conscience is aroused. Long before the tortuous folds which envelop the mystery can be penetrated, while it is still sunk in profound obscurity, the

voice of the nation, like an excited hive, buzzes around the secret; though the magistrates doubt, the public curiosity fixes itself, and never leaves go; if the criminal's hiding-place is changed, it follows the track, points it out, descries it in the gloom. This is what happened on the news of Derues' arrest. The affair was everywhere discussed, although the information was incomplete, reports inexact, and no real publicity to be obtained. The romance which Derues had invented by way of defence, and which became known as well as Monsieur de Lamotte's accusation, obtained no credence whatever; on the contrary, all the reports to his discredit were eagerly adopted. As yet, no crime could be traced, but the public presentiment divined an atrocious one. Have we not often seen similar agitations? The names of Bastide, of Castaing, of Papavoine, had hardly been pronounced before they completely absorbed all the public attention, and this had to be satisfied, light had to be thrown on the darkness: society demanded vengeance.

Derues felt some alarm in his dungeon, but his presence of mind and his dissimulation in no wise deserted him, and he swore afresh every day to the truth of his statements. But his last false assertion turned against him: the bond for a hundred thousand livres which he professed to have given to Duclos was a counterfeit which Duclos had annulled by a sort of counter declaration made the same day. Another circumstance, intended to ensure his safety, only redoubled suspicion. On April 8th, notes payable to order to the amount of seventy-eight thousand livres, were received by Monsieur de Lamotte's lawyer, as if coming from Madame de Lamotte. It appeared extraordinary that these notes, which arrived in an ordinary stamped envelope, should not be accompanied by any letter of advice, and suspicion attached to Madame Derues, who hitherto had remained unnoticed. An inquiry as to where the packet had been posted soon revealed the office, distinguished by a letter of the alphabet, and the postmaster described a servant-maid who had brought the letter and paid for it. The description resembled the Derues' servant; and this girl, much alarmed,

acknowledged, after a great deal of hesitation, that she had posted the letter in obedience to her mistress's orders. Whereupon Madame Derues was sent as a prisoner to Fort l'Évèque, and her husband transferred to the Grand-Châtelet. On being interrogated, she at length owned that she had sent these notes to Monsieur de Lamotte's lawyer, and that her husband had given them her in an envelope hidden in the soiled linen for which she had brought him clean in exchange.

All this certainly amounted to serious presumptive evidence of guilt, and if Derues had shown himself to the multitude, which followed every phase of the investigation with increasing anxiety, a thousand arms would have willingly usurped the office of the executioner; but the distance thence to actual proof of murder was enormous for the magistracy. Derues maintained his tranquillity, always asserting that Madame de Lamotte and her son were alive, and would clear him by their reappearance. Neither threats nor stratagems succeeded in making him contradict himself, and his assurance shook the strongest conviction. A new difficulty was added to so much uncertainty.

A messenger had been sent off secretly with all haste to Lyons; his return was awaited for a test which it was thought would be decisive.

One morning Derues was fetched from his prison and taken to a lower hall of the Conciergerie. He received no answers to the questions addressed to his escort, and this silence showed him the necessity of being on his guard and preserving his imperturbable demeanour whatever might happen. On arriving, he found the commissioner of police, Mutel, and some other persons. The hall being very dark, had been illuminated with several torches, and Derues was so placed that the light fell strongly on his face, and was then ordered to look towards a particular part of the hall. As he did so, a door opened, and a man entered. Derues beheld him with indifference, and seeing that the stranger was observing him attentively, he bowed to him as one might bow to an unknown person whose curiosity seems rather unusual.

It was impossible to detect the slightest trace of emotion, a

hand placed on his heart would not have felt an increased pulsation, yet this stranger's recognition would be fatal!

Mutel approached the new-comer and whispered—

"Do you recognise him?"

"No, I do not."

"Have the kindness to leave the room for a moment; we will ask you to return immediately."

This individual was the lawyer in whose office at Lyons the deed had been drawn up which Derues had signed, disguised as a woman, and under the name of Marie-Françoise Périer, wife of the Sieur de Lamotte.

A woman's garments were brought in, and Derues was ordered to put them on, which he did readily, affecting much amusement. As he was assisted to disguise himself, he laughed, stroked his chin and assumed mincing airs, carrying effrontery so far as to ask for a mirror.

"I should like to see if it is becoming," he said; "perhaps I might make some conquests."

The lawyer returned: Derues was made to pass before him, to sit at a table, sign a paper, in fact to repeat everything it was imagined he might have said or done in the lawyer's office. This second attempt at identification succeeded no better than the first. The lawyer hesitated; then, understanding all the importance of his deposition, he refused to swear to anything, and finally declared that this was not the person who had come to him at Lyons.

"I am sorry, sir," said Derues, as they removed him, "that you should have been troubled by having to witness this absurd comedy. Do not blame me for it; but ask Heaven to enlighten those who do not fear to accuse me. As for me, knowing that my innocence will shortly be made clear, I pardon them henceforth."

Although justice at this period was generally expeditious, and the lives of accused persons were by no means safe-guarded as they now are, it was impossible to condemn Derues in the absence of any positive proof sof guilt. He knew this, and waited patiently in his prison for the moment when he should

triumph over the capital accusation which weighed against him. The storm no longer thundered over his head, the most terrible trials were passed, the examinations became less frequent, and there were no more surprises to dread. The lamentations of Monsieur de Lamotte went to the hearts of the magistrates, but his certainty could not establish theirs, and they pitied, but could not avenge him. In certain minds a sort of reaction favourable to the prisoner began to set in. Among the dupes of Derues' seeming piety, many who at first held their peace under these crushing accusations returned to their former opinion. The bigots and devotees, all who made a profession of kneeling in the churches, of publicly crossing themselves and dipping their fingers in the holy water, and who lived on cant and repetitions of "Amen" and "Alleluia," talked of persecution, of martyrdom, until Derues nearly became a saint destined by the Almighty to find canonisation in a dungeon. Hence arose quarrels and arguments; and this abortive trial, this unproved accusation, kept the public imagination in a constant ferment.

To the greater part of those who talk of the "Supreme Being," and who expect His intervention in human affairs, "Providence" is only a word, solemn and sonorous, a sort of theatrical machine which sets all right in the end, and which they glorify with a few banalities proceeding from the lips, but not from the heart. It is true that this unknown and mysterious Cause which we call "God" or "Chance" often appears so exceedingly blind and deaf that one may be permitted to wonder whether certain crimes are really set apart for punishment, when so many others apparently go scot-free. How many murders remain buried in the night of the tomb! how many outrageous and avowed crimes have slept peacefully in an insolent and audacious prosperity! We know the names of many criminals, but who can tell the number of unknown and forgotten victims? The history of humanity is twofold, and like that of the invisible world, which contains marvels unexplored by the science of the visible one, the history recounted in books is by no means the most curious and strange. But without delaying over questions

such as these, without protesting here against sophistries which cloud the conscience and hide the presence of an avenging Deity, we leave the facts to the general judgment, and have now to relate the last episode in this long and terrible drama.

Of all the populous quarters of Paris which commented on the "affaire Derues," none showed more excitement than that of the Grève, and amongst all the surrounding streets none could boast more numerous crowds than the rue de la Mortellerie. Not that a secret instinct magnetised the crowd in the very place where the proof lay buried, but that each day its attention was aroused by a painful spectacle. A pale and grief-stricken man, whose eyes seemed quenched in tears, passed often down the street, hardly able to drag himself along; it was Monsieur de Lamotte, who lodged, as we have said, in the rue de la Mortellerie, and who seemed like a spectre wandering round a tomb. The crowd made way and uncovered before him, everybody respected such terrible misfortune, and when he had passed, the groups formed up again, and continued discussing the mystery until nightfall.

On April 17th, about four in the afternoon, a score of workmen and gossiping women had collected in front of a shop. A stout woman, standing on the lowest step, like an orator in the tribune, held forth and related for the twentieth time what she knew, or rather, did not know. There were listening ears and gaping mouths, even a slight shudder ran through the group; for the widow Masson, discovering a gift of eloquence at the age of sixty, contrived to mingle great warmth and much indignation in her recital. All at once silence fell on the crowd, and a passage was made for Monsieur de Lamotte. One man ventured to ask—

"Is there anything fresh to-day?"

A sad shake of the head was the only answer, and the unhappy man continued his way.

"Is that Monsieur de Lamotte?" inquired a particularly dirty woman, whose cap, stuck on the side of her head, allowed locks of grey hair to straggle from under it. "Ah! is that Monsieur de Lamotte?"

"Dear me!" said a neighbour, "don't you know him by this time? He passes every day."

"Excuse me! I don't belong to this quarter, and—no offence—but it is not so beautiful as to bring one out of curiosity! Nothing personal—but it is rather dirty."

"Madame is probably accustomed to use a carriage."

"That would suit you better than me, my dear, and would save your having to buy shoes to keep your feet off the ground!"

The crowd seemed inclined to hustle the speaker, but—

"Wait a moment!" she continued, "I didn't mean to offend anyone. I am a poor woman, but there's no disgrace in that, and I can afford a glass of liqueur. Eh, good gossip, you understand, don't you? A drop of the best for Mother Maniffret, and if my fine friend there will drink with me to settle our difference, I will stand her a glass."

The example set by the old hawker was contagious, and instead of filling two little glasses only, the widow Masson dispensed a bottleful.

"Come, you have done well," cried Mother Maniffret; "my idea has brought you luck."

"Faith! not before it was wanted, either!"

"What! are you complaining of trade too?"

"Ah! don't mention it; it is miserable!"

"There's no trade at all. I scream myself hoarse all day, and choke myself for twopence halfpenny. I don't know what's to come of it all. But you seem to have a nice little custom."

"What's the good of that, with a whole house on one's hands? It's just my luck; the old tenants go, and the new ones don't come."

"What's the matter, then?"

"I think the devil's in it. There was a nice man on the first floor—gone; a decent family on the third, all right except that the man beat his wife every night, and made such a row that no one could sleep—gone also. I put up notices—no one even looks at them! A few months ago—it was the middle of December, the day of the last execution——"

"The 15th, then," said the hawker. "I cried it, so I know; it's my trade, that."

"Very well, then, the 15th," resumed widow Masson. "On that day, then, I let the cellar to a man who said he was a wine merchant, and who paid a term in advance, seeing that I didn't know him, and wouldn't have lent him a farthing on the strength of his good looks. He was a little bit of a man, no taller than that,"—contemptuously holding out her hand,—"and he had two round eyes which I didn't like at all. He certainly paid, he did that, but we are more than half through the second term and I have no news of my tenant."

"And have you never seen him since?"

"Yes, once—no, twice. Let's see—three times, I am sure. He came with a hand-cart and a commissionaire, and had a big chest taken downstairs—a case which he said contained wine in bottles. . . . No, he came before that, with a workman, I think. . . . Really, I don't know if it was before or after—doesn't matter. Anyhow, it was bottled wine. The third time he brought a mason, and I am sure they quarrelled. I heard their voices. He carried off the key, and I have seen neither him nor his wine again. I have another key, and I went down one day; perhaps the rats have drunk the wine and eaten the chest, for there certainly is nothing there any more than there is in my hand now. Nevertheless, I saw what I saw. A big chest, very big, quite new, and corded all round with strong rope."

"Now, what day was that?" asked the hawker.

"What day? Well, it was—no, I can't remember."

"Nor I either; I am getting stupid. Let's have another little glass—shall we? just to clear our memories!"

The expedient was not crowned with success, the memories failed to recover themselves. The crowd waited, attentive, as may be supposed. Suddenly the hawker exclaimed—

"What a fool I am! I am going to find that, if only I have still got it."

She felt eagerly in the pocket of her underskirt, and produced several pieces of dirty, crumpled paper. As she unfolded one after another, she asked—

"A big chest, wasn't it?"

"Yes, very big."

"And quite new?"

"Quite new."

"And corded?"

"Yes, I can see it now."

"So can I, good gracious! It was the day when I sold the history of Leroi de Valines, the 1st of February."

"Yes, it was a Saturday; the next day was Sunday."

"That's it, that's it!—Saturday, February 1st. Well, I know that chest too! I met your wine merchant on the Place du Louvre, and he wasn't precisely enjoying himself: one of his crditors wanted to seize the chest, the wine, the whole kettle of fish! A little man, isn't he?—a scarecrow?"

"Just so."

"And has red hair?"

"That's the man."

"And looks a hypocrite?"

"You've hit it exactly."

"And he is a hypocrite! enough to make one shudder! No doubt he can't pay his rent! A thief, my dears, a beggarly thief, who set fire to his own cellar, and who accused me of trying to steal from him, while it was he who cheated me, the villain, out of a piece of twenty-four sous. It's lucky I turned up here! Well, well, we shall have some fun! Here's another little business on your hands, and you will have to say where that wine has got to, my dear gossip Derues."

"Derues!" cried twenty voices all at once.

"What! Derues who is in prison?"

"Why, that's Monsieur de Lamotte's man."

"The man who killed Madame de Lamotte?"

"The man who made away with her son?"

"A scoundrel, my dears, who accused me of stealing, an absolute monster!"

"It is just a little unfortunate," said widow Masson, "that it isn't the man. My tenant calls himself Ducoudray. There's his name on the register."

"Confound it, that doesn't look like it at all," said the hawker: "now that's a bore! Oh yes, I have a grudge against that thief, who accused me of stealing. I told him I should sell his history some day. When that happens, I'll treat you all round."

As a foretaste of the fulfilment of this promise, the company disposed of a second bottle of liqueur, and, becoming excited, they chattered at random for some time, but at length slowly dispersed, and the street relapsed into the silence of night. But, a few hours later, the inhabitants were surprised to see the two ends occupied by unknown people, while other sinister-looking persons patrolled it all night, as if keeping guard. The next morning a carriage escorted by police stopped at the widow Masson's door. An officer of police got out and entered a neighbouring house, whence he emerged a quarter of an hour later with Monsieur de Lamotte leaning on his arm. The officer demanded the key of the cellar which last December had been hired from the widow Masson by a person named Ducoudray, and went down to it with Monsieur de Lamotte and one of his subordinates.

The carriage standing at the door, the presence of the commissioner Mutel, the chatter of the previous evening, had naturally roused everybody's imagination. But this excitement had to be kept for home use: the whole street was under arrest, and its inhabitants were forbidden to leave their houses. The windows, crammed with anxious faces, questioning each other, in the expectation of something wonderful, were a curious sight; and the ignorance in which they remained, these mysterious preparations, these orders silently executed, doubled the curiosity, and added a sort of terror: no one could see the persons who had accompanied the police officer; three men remained in the carriage, one guarded by the two others. When the heavy coach turned into the rue de la Mortellerie, this man had bent towards the closed window and asked—

"Where are we?"

And when they answered him, he said—

"I do not know this street; I was never in it."

After saying this quite quietly, he asked—

"Why am I brought here?"

As no one replied, he resumed his look of indifference, and betrayed no emotion, neither when the carriage stopped nor when he saw Monsieur de Lamotte enter the widow Masson's house.

The officer reappeared on the threshold, and ordered Derues to be brought in.

The previous evening, detectives, mingling with the crowd, had listened to the hawker's story of having met Derues near the Louvre escorting a large chest. The police magistrate was informed in the course of the evening. It was an indication, a ray of light, perhaps the actual truth, detached from obscurity by chance gossip; and measures were instantly taken to prevent anyone either entering or leaving the street without being followed and examined. Mutel thought he was on the track, but the criminal might have accomplices also on the watch, who, warned in time, might be able to remove the proofs of the crime, if any existed.

Derues was placed between two men who each held an arm. A third went before, holding a torch. The commissioner, followed by men also carrying torches, and provided with spades and pickaxes, came behind, and in this order they descended to the vault. It was a dismal and terrifying procession; anyone beholding these dark and sad countenances, this pale and resigned man, passing thus into these damp vaults illuminated by the flickering glare of torches, might well have thought himself the victim of illusion and watching some gloomy execution in a dream. But all was real, and when light penetrated this dismal charnel-house it seemed at once to illuminate its secret depths, so that the light of truth might at length penetrate these dark shadows, and that the voice of the dead would speak from the earth and the walls.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Monsieur de Lamotte, when he saw Derues appear, "is it here that you murdered my wife and my son?"

Derues looked calmly at him, and replied—

"I beg you, sir, not to add insult to the misfortunes you have already caused. If you stood in my place and I were in

yours, I should feel some pity and respect for so terrible a position. What do you want of me? and why am I brought here?"

He did not know the events of last evening, and could only mentally accuse the mason who had helped to bury the chest. He felt that he was lost, but his audacity never forsook him.

"You are here, in the first place, to be confronted with this woman," said the officer, causing the widow Masson to stand opposite to him.

"I do not know her."

"But I know you, and know you well. It was you who hired this cellar under the name of Ducoudray."

Derues shrugged his shoulders and answered bitterly—

"I can understand a man being condemned to the torture if he is guilty, but that in order to accomplish one's mission as accuser, and to discover a criminal, false witnesses who can give no evidence should be brought a hundred leagues, that the rabble should be roused up, that divers faces and imaginary names should be bestowed on an innocent man, in order to turn a movement of surprise or an indignant gesture to his disadvantage, all this is iniquitous, and goes beyond the right of judgment bestowed upon men by God. I do not know this woman, and no matter what she says or does, I shall say no more."

Neither the skill nor threats of the police officer could shake this resolution. It was to no purpose that the widow Masson repeated and asseverated that she recognised him as her tenant Ducoudray, and that he had had a large case of wine taken down into the cellar; Derues folded his arms, and remained as motionless as if he had been blind and deaf.

The walls were sounded, the stones composing them carefully examined, the floor pierced in several places, but nothing unusual was discovered. Would they have to give it up? Already the officer was making signs to this effect, when the man who had remained at first below with Monsieur de Lamotte, and who, standing in shadow, had carefully watched Derues when he was brought down, came forward, and pointing to the recess under the stairs, said—

"Examine this corner. The prisoner glanced involuntarily in this direction when he came down; I have watched him, and it is the only sign he has given. I was the only person who could see him, and he did not see me. He is very clever, but one can't be for ever on one's guard, and may the devil take me if I haven't scented the hiding-place."

"Wretch!" said Derues to himself, "then you have had your hand on me for a whole hour, and amused yourself by prolonging my agony! Oh! I ought to have known it; I have found my master. Never mind, you shall learn nothing from my face, nor yet from the decaying body you will find; worms and poison can only have left an unrecognisable corpse."

An iron rod sunk into the ground, encountered a hard substance some four feet below. Two men set to work, and dug with energy. Every eye was fixed upon this trench increasing in depth with every shovelful of earth which the two labourers cast aside. Monsieur de Lamotte was nearly fainting, and his emotion impressed everyone except Derues. At length the silence was broken by the spades striking heavily on wood, and the noise made everyone shudder. The chest was uncovered and hoisted out of the trench; it was opened, and the body of a woman was seen, clad only in a chemise, with a red and white headband, face downwards. The body was turned over, and Monsieur de Lamotte recognised his wife, not yet disfigured.

The feeling of horror was so great that no one spoke or uttered a sound. Derues, occupied in considering the few vague chances which remained to him, had not observed that, by the officer's order, one of the guards had left the cellar before the men began to dig. Everybody had drawn back both from the corpse and the murderer, who alone had not moved, and who was repeating prayers. The flame of the torches placed on the ground cast a reddish light on this silent and terrible scene.

Derues started and turned round on hearing a terrified cry behind him. His wife had just been brought to the cellar. The commissioner seized her with one hand, and taking a torch in the other, compelled her to look down on the body.

"It is Madame de Lamotte!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes," she answered, overwhelmed with terror,—"yes, I recognise her!"

Unable to support the sight any longer, she grew pale and fainted away. She and her husband were removed separately. One would have supposed the discovery was already known outside, for the people showered curses and cries of "Assassin!" and "Poisoner!" on the carriage which conveyed Derues. He remained silent during the drive, but before re-entering his dungeon, he said—

"I must have been mad when I sought to hide the death and burial of Madame de Lamotte from public knowledge. It is the only sin I have committed, and, innocent of aught else, I resign myself as a Christian to the judgment of God."

It was the only line of defence which remained open to him, and he clung to it, with the hope of imposing on the magistrates by redoubled hypocrisy and pious observances. But all this laboriously constructed scaffolding of lies was shaken to its base and fell away piece by piece. Every moment brought fresh and overwhelming revelations. He professed that Madame de Lamotte had died suddenly in his house, and that, fearing suspicion, he had buried her secretly. But the doctors called on to examine the body declared that she had been poisoned with corrosive sublimate and opium. The pretended payment was clearly an odious imposture, the receipt a forgery! Then, like a threatening spectre, arose another question, to which he found no reply, and his own invention turned against him. Why, knowing his mother was no more, had he taken young de Lamotte to Versailles? What had become of the youth? What had befallen him? Once on the track, the cooper with whom he had lodged on the 12th of February was soon discovered, and an Act of Parliament ordered the exhumation of the corpse buried under the name of Beaupré, which the cooper identified by a shirt which he had given for the burial. Derues, confounded by the evidence, asserted that the youth died of indigestion and venereal disease. But the doctors again declared the presence of

corrosive sublimate and opium. All this evidence of guilt he met with assumed resignation, lamenting incessantly for Edouard, whom he declared he had loved as his own son. "Alas!" he said, "I see that poor boy every night! But it softens my grief to know that he was not deprived of the last consolations of religion! God, who sees me, and who knows my innocence, will enlighten the magistrates, and my honour will be vindicated."

The evidence being complete, Derues was condemned by sentence of the Châtelet, pronounced April 30th, and confirmed by Parliament, May 5th. We give the decree as it is found in the archives:—

"This Court having considered the trial held before the Provost of Paris, or his Deputy-Lieutenant at the Châtelet, for the satisfaction of the aforesaid Deputy at the aforesaid Châtelet, at the request of the Deputy of the King's Attorney-General at the aforesaid Court, summoner and plaintiff, against Antoine-François Derues, and Marie-Louise Nicolais, his wife, defendants and accused, prisoners in the prisons of the Conciergerie of the Palace at Paris, who have appealed from the sentence given at the aforesaid trial, the thirtieth day of April 1777, by which the aforesaid Antoine-François Derues has been declared duly attainted and convicted of attempting unlawfully to appropriate without payment, the estate of Buisson-Souef, belonging to the Sieur and Dame de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, from whom he had bought the said estate by private contract on the twenty-second day of December 1775, and also of having unworthily abused the hospitality shown by him since the sixteenth day of December last towards the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, who arrived in Paris on the aforesaid day in order to conclude with him the bargain agreed on in December 1775, and who, for this purpose, and at his request, lodged with her son in the house of the said Derues, who of premeditated design poisoned the said Dame de Lamotte, whether by a medicine composed and prepared by him on the thirtieth day of January last, or by the beverages

and drinks administered by him after the aforesaid medicine (he having taken the precaution to send his servant into the country for two or three days, and to keep away strangers from the room where the said Dame de Lamotte was lying), from the effects of which poison the said Dame de Lamotte died on the night of the said thirty-first day of January last; also of having kept her demise secret, and of having himself enclosed in a chest the body of the said Dame de Lamotte, which he then caused to be secretly transported to a cellar in the rue de la Mortellerie hired by him for this purpose, under the assumed name of Ducoudray, wherein he buried it himself, or caused it to be buried; also of having persuaded the son of the above Dame de Lamotte (who, with his mother, had lodged in his house from the time of their arrival in Paris until the fifteenth day of January last, and who had then been placed in a school) that the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte was at Versailles and desired him to join her there, and, under this pretence, of having conducted the said younger Sieur de Lamotte, the twelfth day of February (after having given him some chocolate), to the aforesaid town of Versailles, to a lodging hired at a cooper's, and of having there wilfully poisoned him, either in the chocolate taken by the said younger Sieur de Lamotte before starting, or in beverages and medicaments which the said Derues himself prepared, mixed, and administered to the aforesaid Sieur de Lamotte the younger, during the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth days of February last, having kept him lying ill in the aforesaid hired room, and having refused to call in physicians or surgeons, notwithstanding the progress of the malady, and the representations made to him on the subject, saying that he himself was a physician and surgeon; from which poison the said Sieur de Lamotte the younger died on the fifteenth day of February last, at nine o'clock in the evening, in the arms of the aforesaid Derues, who, affecting the deepest grief, and shedding tears, actually exhorted the aforesaid Sieur de Lamotte to confession, and repeated the prayers for the dying; after which he himself laid out the body for burial, saying that the deceased had

begged him to do so, and telling the people of the house that he had died of venereal disease; also of having caused him to be buried the next day in the churchyard of the parish church of Saint Louis at the aforesaid Versailles, and of having entered the deceased in the register of the said parish under a false birthplace, and the false name of Beaupré, which name the said Derues had himself assumed on arriving at the said lodging, and had given to the said Sieur de Lamotte the younger, whom he declared to be his nephew. Also, to cover these atrocities, and in order to appropriate to himself the aforesaid estate of Buisson-Souef, he is convicted of having calumniated the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, and of having used various manœuvres and practised several deceptions, to wit—

"First, in signing, or causing to be signed, the names of the above Dame de Lamotte to a deed of private contract between the said Derues and his wife on one side and the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte by right of a power of attorney given by her husband on the other (the which deed is dated the twelfth day of February, and was therefore written after the decease of the said Dame de Lamotte); by which deed the said Dame de Lamotte appears to change the previous conventions agreed on in the first deed of the twenty-second of December in the year 1775, and acknowledges receipt from the said Derues of a sum of one hundred thousand livres, as being the price of the estate of Buisson;

"Secondly, in signing before a notary, the ninth day of February last, a feigned acknowledgment for a third part of a hundred thousand livres, in order to give credence to the pretended payment made by him;

"Thirdly, in announcing and publishing, and attesting even by oath at the time of an examination before the commissioner Mutel, that he had really paid in cash to the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte the aforesaid hundred thousand livres, and that she, being provided with this money, had fled with her son and a certain person unknown;

"Fourthly, in depositing with a notary the deed of private contract bearing the pretended receipt for the above sum of

one hundred thousand livres, and pursuing at law the execution of this deed and of his claim to the possession of the said estate;

"Fifthly, in signing or causing to be signed by another person, before the notaries of the town of Lyons, whither he had gone for this purpose, a deed dated the twelfth day of March, by which the supposed Dame de Lamotte appeared to accept the payment of the hundred thousand livres, and to give authority to the Sieur de Lamotte, her husband, to receive the arrears of the remainder of the price of the said estate, the which deed he produced as a proof of the existence of the said Dame de Lamotte;

"Sixthly, in causing to be sent, by other hands, under the name of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, to a lawyer, on the eighth day of April 1777 (at a time when he was in prison, and had been compelled to abandon the fable that he had paid the aforesaid sum of one hundred thousand livres in hard cash, and had substituted a pretended payment made in notes), the notes pretended to have been given by him in payment to the said Dame de Lamotte;

"Seventh, and finally, in maintaining constantly, until the discovery of the body of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte, that the said Dame was still alive, and that he had seen her at the town of Lyons, as has been stated above.

"In atonement has been condemned, etc. etc. etc.

"His goods are hereby declared acquired and confiscated to the King, or to whomsoever His Majesty shall appoint, first deducting the sum of two hundred livres as fine for the King, in case the confiscation is not to the sole profit of His Majesty; and also the sum of six hundred livres for masses to be said for the repose of the souls of the aforesaid Dame de Lamotte and her son. And, before being executed, the said Antoine-François Derues shall suffer the question ordinary and extraordinary, in order that from his mouth may be learned the truth of these facts, and also the names of his accomplices. And the decision of the judges in the proceedings with regard to the above-mentioned Marie-Louise Nicolais, wife of Derues,

is delayed until after the execution of the above sentence. It is also decreed that the mortuary act of the aforesaid de Lamotte the younger, dated the sixteenth day of February last, in the register of deaths belonging to the parish church of Saint-Louis at Versailles, be amended, and his correct names be substituted, in order that the said Sieur de Lamotte, the father, and other persons interested, may produce said names before the magistrates if required. And it is also decreed that this sentence be printed and published by the deputy of the Attorney-General at the Châtelet, and affixed to the walls in the usual places and cross roads of the town, provostship and viscounty of Paris, and wherever else requisite.

"With regard to the petition of Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, a Royal Equerry, Sieur de Grange-Flandre, Buisson-Souef, Valperfond, and other places, widower and inheritor of Marie-Françoise Périer, his wife, according to their marriage contract signed before Baron and partner, notaries at Paris, the fifth day of September 1762, whereby he desires to intervene in the action brought against Derues and his accomplices, concerning the assassination and poisoning committed on the persons of the wife and son of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, on the accusation made by him to the Deputy Attorney-General of the King at the Châtelet at present pending in the Court, on the report of the final judgment given in the said action the 30th of April last, and which allowed the intervention; it is decreed that there shall be levied on the goods left by the condemned, before the rights of the Treasury, and separate from them, the sum of six thousand livres, or such other sum as it shall please the Court to award; from which sum the said Saint-Faust de Lamotte shall consent to deduct the sum of two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight livres, which he acknowledges has been sent or remitted to him by the said Derues and his wife at different times; which first sum of six thousand livres, or such other, shall be employed by the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, who is authorised to found therewith, in the parish church of Saint-Nicholas de Villeneuve-le-Roy, in which parish the estate

of Buisson-Souef is situate, and which is mentioned in the action, an annual and perpetual service for the repose of the souls of the wife and son of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, of which an act shall be inserted in the decree of intervention, and a copy of this act or decree shall be inscribed upon a stone which shall be set in the wall of the said church of Saint-Nicholas de Villeneuve-le-Roy, in such place as is expedient. And the deed of contract for private sale, made between the late spouse of the said Sieur de Saint-Faust de Lamotte and the above-named Derues and his wife, is hereby declared null and void, as having had no value in absence of any payment or realisation of contract before a notary; and the pretended agreement of the twelfth day of February last, as also all other deeds fabricated by the said Derues or others, named in the above action, as also any which may hereafter be presented, are hereby declared to be null and void.

"The Court declares the judgment pronounced by the magistrates of the Châtelet against the above-named Derues to be good and right, and his appeal against the same to be bad and ill-founded.

"It is decreed that the sentence shall lose its full and entire effect with regard to Marie-Louise Nicolais, who is condemned to the ordinary fine of twelve livres. The necessary relief granted on the petition of Pierre-Etienne de Saint-Faust de Lamotte, the second day of May this present month, and delay accorded until after the suspended judgment pronounced with regard to the said Marie-Louise Nicolais.

"(*Signed*) DE GOURGUES, *President.*
"OUTREMONT, *Councillor.*"

Derues' assurance and calmness never deserted him for one moment. For three-quarters of an hour he harangued the Parliament, and his defence was remarkable both for its presence of mind and the art with which he made the most of any circumstances likely to suggest doubts to the magistrates and soften the severity of the first sentence. Found guilty on

every point, he yet protested that he was innocent of poisoning. Remorse, which often merely means fear of punishment, had no place in his soul, and torture he seemed not to dread. As strong in will as he was weak in body, he desired to die like a martyr in the faith of his religion, which was hypocrisy, and the God whom he gloried on the scaffold was the god of lies.

On May 6th, at seven in the morning, the sentence of execution was read to him. He listened calmly, and when it was finished, remarked—

"I had not anticipated so severe a sentence."

A few hours later the instruments of torture were got ready. He was told that this part of his punishment would be remitted if he would confess his crimes and the names of his accomplices. He replied—

"I have no more to say. I know what terrible torture awaits me, I know I must die to-day, but I have nothing to confess."

He made no resistance when his knees and legs were bound, and endured the torture courageously. Only, in a moment of agony, he exclaimed—

"Accursed money! hast thou reduced me to this?"

Thinking that pain would overcome his resolution, the presiding magistrate bent towards him, and said—

"Unhappy man! confess thy crime, since death is near at hand."

He recovered his firmness, and, looking at the magistrate, replied—

"I know it, monseigneur; I have perhaps not three hours to live."

Thinking that his apparently feeble frame could not endure the last wedges, the executioner was ordered to stop. He was unbound and laid on a mattress, and a glass of wine was brought, of which he only drank a few drops; after this, he made his confession to the priest. For dinner, they brought him soup and stew, which he ate eagerly, and inquiring of the gaoler if he could have something more, an entrée was brought in addition.

One might have thought that this final repast heralded, not death but deliverance. At length three o'clock struck—the hour appointed for leaving the prison.

According to the report of credible persons whom we have consulted, Paris on this occasion presented a remarkable appearance, which those who saw it were never able to forget. The great anthill was troubled to its very lowest depth. Whether by accident or design, the same day had been fixed for a function which ought to have proved a considerable counter attraction. A great festival in honour of a German prince was given on the Plaine de Grenelle, at which all the court was present; and probably more than one great lady regretted missing the emotions of the Place de Grève, abandoned to the rabble and the bourgeoisie. The rest of the city was deserted, the streets silent, the houses closed. A stranger transported suddenly into such a solitude might have reasonably thought that during the night the town had been smitten by the Angel of Death, and that only a labyrinth of vacant buildings remained, testifying to the life and turmoil of the preceding day. A dark and dense atmosphere hung over the abandoned town; lightning furrowed the heavy motionless clouds; in the distance the occasional rumble of thunder was heard, answered by the cannon of the royal fête. The crowd was divided between the powers of heaven and earth: the terrible majesty of the Eternal on one side, on the other the frivolous pomp of royalty—eternal punishment and transient grandeur in opposition. Like the waters of a flood leaving dry the fields which they have covered, so the waves of the multitude forsook their usual course. Thousands of men and women crowded together along the route which the death-cart would take; an ocean of heads undulated like the ears in a wheatfield. The old houses, hired at high rates, quivered under the weight of eager spectators, and the window sashes had been removed to afford a better view.

Attired in the shirt worn by condemned criminals, and bearing a placard both in front and behind, with the words "Wilful Poisoner," Derues descended the great staircase of

the Châtelet with a firm step. It was at this moment, on seeing the crucifix, that he exclaimed, "O Christ, I shall suffer like Thee!" He mounted the tumbril, looking right and left amongst the crowd. During the progress he recognised and bowed to several of his old associates, and bade adieu in a clear voice to the former mistress of his 'prentice days, who has recorded that she never saw him look so pleasant. Arrived at the door of Nôtre Dame, where the clerk was awaiting him, he descended from the tumbril without assistance, took a lighted wax taper weighing two pounds in his hand, and did penance, kneeling, bareheaded and barefooted, a rope round his neck, repeating the words of the death-warrant. He then reascended the cart in the midst of the cries and execrations of the populace, to which he appeared quite insensible. One voice only, endeavouring to dominate the tumult, caused him to turn his head: it was that of the hawker who was crying his sentence, and who broke off now and then to say—

"Well! my poor gossip Derues, how do you like that fine carriage you're in? Oh yes, mutter your prayers and look up to heaven as much as you like, you won't take us in now. Ah! thief who said I stole from you! Wasn't I right when I said I should be selling your sentence some day?"

Then, adding her own wrongs to the list of crimes, she declared that the Parliament had condemned him as much for having falsely accused her of theft as for having poisoned Madame de Lamotte and her son!

When arrived at the scaffold, he gazed around him, and a sort of shiver of impatience ran through the crowd. He smiled, and as if anxious to trick mankind for the last time, asked to be taken to the Hôtel de Ville, which was granted, in the hope that he would at last make some confession; but he only persisted in saying that he was guiltless of poisoning. He had an interview with his wife, who nearly fainted on seeing him, and remained for more than a quarter of an hour unable to say a word. He lavished tender names upon her, and professed much affliction at seeing her in so miserable a condition. When she was taken away, he asked permission to

Vermier, del. *Lafond, sculp.*

DERNES DOING PENANCE IN FRONT OF THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME

embrace her, and took a most touching farewell. His last words have been preserved.

"My dear wife," he said, "I recommend our beloved children to your care: bring them up in the fear of God. You must go to Chartres, you will there see the bishop, on whom I had the honour of waiting when I was there last, and who has always been kind to me; I believe he has thought well of me, and that I may hope he will take pity on you and on our children."

It was now seven in the evening, and the crowd began to murmur at the long delay. At length the criminal reappeared. An onlooker who saw him go to the Hôtel de Ville, and who was carried by the movement of the crowd to the foot of the scaffold, says that when handed over to the executioner he took off his clothes himself. He kissed the instrument of punishment with devotion, then extended himself on the St. Andrew's cross, asking with a resigned smile that they would make his sufferings as short as possible. As soon as his head was covered, the executioner gave the signal. One would have thought a very few blows would have finished so frail a being, but he seemed as hard to kill as the venomous reptiles which must be crushed and cut to pieces before life is extinct, and the *coup de grâce* was found necessary. The executioner uncovered his head and showed the confessor that the eyes were closed and that the heart had ceased to beat. The body was then removed from the cross, the hands and feet fastened together, and it was thrown on the funeral pile.

While the execution was proceeding the people applauded. On the morrow they bought up the fragments of bone, and hastened to buy lottery tickets, in the firm conviction that these precious relics would bring luck to the fortunate possessors!

In 1777, Madame Derues was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, and confined at the Salpêtrière. She was one of the first victims who perished in the prison massacres.

LA CONSTANTIN

LA CONSTANTIN

1660

CHAPTER I

BEFORE beginning our story, we must warn the reader that it will not be worth his while to make researches among contemporary or other records as to the personage whose name it bears. For in truth neither Marie Leroux, widow of Jacques Constantin, nor her accomplice, Claude Perregaud, was of sufficient importance to find a place on any list of great criminals, although it is certain that they were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged. It may seem strange that what follows is more a history of the retribution which overtook the criminals than a circumstantial description of the deeds for which they were punished; but the crimes were so revolting, and so unsuitable for discussion, that it was impossible for us to enter into any details on the subject, so that what we offer in these pages is, we confess quite openly, not a full, true, and particular account of a certain series of events leading up to a certain result; it is not even a picture wherein that result is depicted with artistic completeness, it is only an imperfect narrative imperfectly rounded off. We feel sure, however, that the healthy-minded reader will be grateful for our reticence and total disregard of proportion. In spite of the disadvantage which such a theme imposes on any writer with a deep sense of responsibility, we have resolved to let in some light on these obscure figures; for we can imagine no more effective way of throwing into high relief the low morals and deep corruption into which all classes of society had

sunk at the termination of the factious dissensions of the Fronde, which formed such a fitting prelude to the licence of the reign of the *grand roi.*

After this explanation, we shall, without further preamble, introduce the reader to a little tavern in Paris, situated in the rue Saint-André-des-Arts, on an evening in November 1658.

It was about seven o'clock. Three gentlemen were seated at one of the tables in a low, smoky room. They had already emptied several bottles, and one of them seemed to have just suggested some madcap scheme to the others, the thought of which sent them off into shouts of laughter.

"*Pardieu!*" said one of them, who was the first to recover his breath, "I must say it would be an excellent trick."

"Splendid!" said another; "and if you like, Commander de Jars, we can try it this very evening."

"All right, my worthy king's treasurer, provided my pretty nephew here won't be too much shocked," and as he spoke de Jars gave to the youngest of the three a caressing touch on the cheek with the back of his hand.

"That reminds me, de Jars!" said the treasurer, "that word you have just said piques my curiosity. For some months now this little fellow here, Chevalier de Moranges, follows you about everywhere like your shadow. You never told us you had a nephew. Where the devil did you get him?"

The commander touched the chevalier's knee under the table, and he, as if to avoid speaking, slowly filled and emptied his glass.

"Look here," said the treasurer, "do you want to hear a few plain words, such as I shall rap out when God takes me to task about the peccadilloes of my past life? I don't believe a word about the relationship. A nephew must be the son of either a brother or a sister. Now, your only sister is an abbess, and your late brother's marriage was childless. There is only one way of proving the relationship, and that is to confess that when your brother was young and wild he and Love met, or else Madame l'Abbesse——"

"Take care, Treasurer Jeannin! no slander against my sister!"

"Well, then, explain; you can't fool me! May I be hanged if I leave this place before I have dragged the secret out of you! Either we are friends or we are not. What you tell no one else you ought to tell me. What! would you make use of my purse and my sword on occasion and yet have secrets from me? It's too bad: speak, or our friendship is at an end! I give you fair warning that I shall find out everything and publish it abroad to court and city: when *I* strike a trail there's no turning me aside. It will be best for you to whisper your secret voluntarily into my ear, where it will be as safe as in the grave."

"How full of curiosity you are, my good friend!" said de Jars, leaning one elbow on the table, and twirling the points of his moustache with his hand; "but if I were to wrap my secret round the point of a dagger would you not be too much afraid of pricking your fingers to pull it off?"

"Not I," said the king's treasurer, beginning to twirl his moustache also: "the doctors have always told me that I am of too full a complexion and that it would do me all the good in the world to be bled now and then. But what would be an advantage to me would be dangerous to you. It's easy to see from your jaundiced phiz that for you blood-letting is no cure."

"And you would really go that length? You would risk a duel if I refused to let you get to the bottom of my mystery?"

"Yes, on my honour! Well, how is it to be?"

"My dear boy," said de Jars to the youth, "we are caught, and may as well yield gracefully. You don't know this big fellow as well as I do. He's obstinacy itself. You can make the most obstinate donkey go on by pulling its tail hard enough, but when Jeannin gets a notion into his pate, not all the legions of hell can get it out again. Besides that, he's a skilful fencer, so there's nothing for it but to trust him."

"Just as you like," said the young man; "you know all my circumstances and how important it is that my secret should be kept."

"Oh! among Jeannin's many vices there are a few virtues,

and of these discretion is the greatest, so that his curiosity is harmless. A quarter of an hour hence he will let himself be killed rather than reveal what just now he is ready to risk his skin to find out, whether we will or no."

Jeannin nodded approvingly, refilled the glasses, and raising his to his lips, said in a tone of triumph—

"I am listening, commander."

"Well, if it must be, it must. First of all, learn that my nephew is not my nephew at all."

"Go on."

"That his name is not Moranges."

"And the next?"

"I am not going to reveal his real name to you."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't know it myself, and no more does the chevalier."

"What nonsense!"

"No nonsense at all, but the sober truth. A few months ago the chevalier came to Paris, bringing me a letter of introduction from a German whom I used to know years ago. This letter requested me to look after the bearer and help him in his investigations. As you said just now, Love and someone once met somewhere, and that was about all was known as to his origin. Naturally the young man wants to cut a figure in the world, and would like to discover the author of his existence, that he may have someone at hand to pay the debts he is going to incur. We have brought together every scrap of information we could collect as to this person, hoping to find therein a clue that we could follow up. To be quite open with you, and convince you at the same time how extremely prudent and discreet we must be, I must tell you that we think we have found one, and that it leads to no less a dignitary than a Prince of the Church. But if he should get wind of our researches too soon everything would be at an end, don't you see? So keep your tongue between your teeth."

"Never fear," said Jeannin. "Now, that's what I call speaking out as a friend should. I wish you luck, my gallant

Chevalier de Moranges, and until you unearth your father, if you want a little money, my purse is at your service. On my word, de Jars, you must have been born with a caul. There never was your equal for wonderful adventures. This one promises well—spicy intrigues, scandalous revelations, and you'll be in the thick of it all. You're a lucky fellow! It's only a few months since you had the most splendid piece of good fortune sent you straight from heaven. A fair lady falls in love with you and makes you carry her off from the convent of La Raquette. But why do you never let anyone catch a glimpse of her? Are you jealous? Or is it that she is no such beauty after all, but old and wrinkled, like that knave of a Mazarin?"

"I know what I'm about," answered de Jars, smiling; "I have my very good reasons. The elopement caused a great deal of indignation, and it's not easy to get fanatics to listen to common sense. No, I am not in the least jealous; she is madly in love with me. Ask my nephew."

"Does he know her?"

"We have no secrets from each other; the confidence between us is without a flaw. The fair one, believe me, is good to look on, and is worth all the ogling, fan-flirting baggages put together that one sees at court or on the balconies of the Palais Royale; I'll answer for that. Isn't she, Moranges?"

"I'm quite of your opinion," said the youth, exchanging with de Jars a singularly significant look; "and you had better treat her well, uncle, or I shall play you some trick."

"Aië! aië!" cried Jeannin. "You poor fellow! I very much fear that you are warming a little serpent in your bosom. Have an eye to this dandy with the beardless chin! But joking apart, my boy, are you really on good terms with the fair lady?"

"Certainly I am."

"And you are not uneasy, commander?"

"Not the least little bit."

"He is quite right. I answer for her as for myself, you know; as long as he loves her she will love him; as long as he is faithful she will be faithful. Do you imagine that a woman who

insists on her lover carrying her off can so easily turn away from the man of her choice? I know her well; I have had long talks with her, she and I alone: she is feather-brained, given to pleasure, entirely without prejudices and those stupid scruples which spoil the lives of other women; but a good sort on the whole; devoted to my uncle, with no deception about her; but at the same time extremely jealous, and has no notion of letting herself be sacrificed to a rival. If ever she finds herself deceived, good-bye to prudence and reserve, and then——"

A look and a touch of the commander's knee cut this panegyric short, to which the treasurer was listening with open-eyed astonishment.

"What enthusiasm!" he exclaimed. "Well, and then——?"

"Why, then," went on the young man, with a laugh, "if my uncle behaves badly, I, his nephew, will try to make up for his wrong-doing: he can't blame me then. But until then he may be quite easy, as he well knows."

"Oh yes, and in proof of that I am going to take Moranges with me to-night. He is young and inexperienced, and it will be a good lesson for him to see how a gallant whose amorous intrigues did not begin yesterday sets about getting even with a coquette. He can turn it to account later on."

"On my word," said Jeannin, "my notion is that he is in no great need of a teacher; however, that's your business, not mine. Let us return to what we were talking about just now. Are we agreed; and shall we amuse ourselves by paying out the lady in her own coin?"

"If you like."

"Which of us is to begin?"

De Jars struck the table with the handle of his dagger.

"More wine, gentlemen?" said the drawer, running up.

"No, dice; and be quick about it."

"Three casts each and the highest wins," said Jeannin. "You begin."

"I throw for myself and nephew." The dice rolled on the table.

"Ace and three."

"It's my turn now. Six and five."

"Pass it over. Five and two."

"We're equal. Four and two."

"Now let me. Ace and blank."

"Double six."

"You have won."

"And I'm off at once," said Jeannin, rising, and muffling himself in his mantle. "It's now half-past seven. We shall see each other again at eight, so I won't say good-bye."

"Good luck to you!"

Leaving the tavern and turning into the rue Pavée, he took the direction of the river.

CHAPTER II

IN 1658, at the corner of the streets Gît-le-Cœur and Le Hurepoix (the site of the latter being now occupied by the Quai des Augustins as far as Pont Saint-Michel), stood the great mansion which Francis I had bought and fitted up for the Duchesse d'Etampes. It was at this period if not in ruins at least beginning to show the ravages of time. Its rich interior decorations had lost their splendour and become antiquated. Fashion had taken up its abode in the Marais, near the Place Royale, and it was thither that profligate women and celebrated beauties now enticed the humming swarm of old rakes and young libertines. Not one of them all would have thought of residing in the mansion, or even in the quarter, wherein the king's mistress had once dwelt. It would have been a step downward in the social scale, and equivalent to a confession that their charms were falling in the public estimation. Still, the old palace was not empty; it had, on the contrary, several tenants. Like the provinces of Alexander's empire, its vast suites of rooms had been subdivided; and so neglected was it by the gay world that people of the commonest description strutted about with impunity where once the proudest nobles had been glad to gain admittance. There, in semi-isolation and despoiled of her greatness, lived Angélique-Louise de Guerchi, formerly companion to Mademoiselle de Pons and then maid of honour to Anne of Austria. Her love intrigues and the scandals they gave rise to had led to her dismissal from court. Not that she was a greater sinner than many who remained behind, only she was unlucky enough or stupid enough to be found out. Her admirers were so indiscreet that they had not left her a shred of reputation, and in a court where a cardinal is the lover of a queen, a hypo-

critical appearance of decorum is indispensable to success. So Angélique had to suffer for the faults she was not clever enough to hide. Unfortunately for her, her income went up and down with the number and wealth of her admirers, so when she left the court all her possessions consisted of a few articles she had gathered together out of the wreck of her former luxury, and these she was now selling one by one to procure the necessaries of life, while she looked back from afar with an envious eye at the brilliant world from which she had been exiled, and longed for better days. All hope was not at an end for her. By a strange law which does not speak well for human nature, vice finds success easier to attain than virtue. There is no courtesan, no matter how low she has fallen, who cannot find a dupe ready to defend against the world an honour of which no vestige remains. A man who doubts the virtue of the most virtuous woman, who shows himself inexorably severe when he discovers the slightest inclination to falter in one whose conduct has hitherto been above reproach, will stoop and pick up out of the gutter a blighted and tarnished reputation and protect and defend it against all slights, and devote his life to the attempt to restore lustre to the unclean thing dulled by the touch of many fingers. In her days of prosperity Commander de Jars and the king's treasurer had both fluttered round Mademoiselle de Guerchi, and neither had fluttered in vain. Short as was the period necessary to overcome her scruples, in as short a period it dawned on the two candidates for her favour that each had a successful rival in the other, and that however potent as a reason for surrender the doubloons of the treasurer had been, the personal appearance of the commander had proved equally cogent. As both had felt for her only a passing fancy and not a serious passion, their explanations with each other led to no quarrel between them; silently and simultaneously they withdrew from her circle, without even letting her know they had found her out, but quite determined to revenge themselves on her should a chance ever offer. However, other affairs of a similar nature had intervened to prevent their carrying out this laudable intention; Jeannin had laid siege to a more inacces-

sible beauty, who had refused to listen to his sighs for less than 30,000 crowns, paid in advance, and de Jars had become quite absorbed by his adventure with the convent boarder at La Raquette, and the business of the young stranger whom he passed off as his nephew. Mademoiselle de Guerchi had never seen them again, and with her it was out of sight out of mind. At the moment when she comes into our story she was weaving her toils round a certain Duc de Vitry, whom she had seen at court, but whose acquaintance she had never made, and who had been absent when the scandalous occurrence which led to her disgrace came to light. He was a man of from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, who idled his life away: his courage was undoubted, and being as credulous as an old libertine, he was ready to draw his sword at any moment to defend the lady whose cause he had espoused, should any insolent slanderer dare to hint there was a smirch on her virtue. Being deaf to all reports, he seemed one of those men expressly framed by heaven to be the consolation of fallen women; such a man as in our times a retired opera-dancer or a superannuated professional beauty would welcome with open arms. He had only one fault—he was married. It is true he neglected his wife, according to the custom of the time, and it is probably also true that his wife cared very little about his infidelities. But still she was an insurmountable obstacle to the fulfilment of Mademoiselle de Guerchi's hopes, who but for her might have looked forward to one day becoming a duchess.

For about three weeks, however, at the time we are speaking of, the duke had neither crossed her threshold nor written. He had told her he was going for a few days to Normandy, where he had large estates, but had remained absent so long after the date he had fixed for his return that she began to feel uneasy. What could be keeping him? Some new flame, perhaps. The anxiety of the lady was all the more keen, that until now nothing had passed between them but looks of languor and words of love. The duke had laid himself and all he possessed at the feet of Angélique, and Angélique had refused his offer. A too prompt surrender would have justified

the reports so wickedly spread against her; and, made wise by experience, she was resolved not to compromise her future as she had compromised her past. But while playing at virtue she had also to play at disinterestedness, and her pecuniary resources were consequently almost exhausted. She had proportioned the length of her resistance to the length of her purse, and now the prolonged absence of her lover threatened to disturb the equilibrium which she had established between her virtue and her money. So it happened that the cause of the lovelorn Duc de Vitry was in great peril just at the moment when de Jars and Jeannin resolved to approach the fair one anew. She was sitting lost in thought, pondering in all good faith on the small profit it was to a woman to be virtuous, when she heard voices in the antechamber. Then her door opened, and the king's treasurer walked in.

As this interview and those which follow took place in the presence of witnesses, we are obliged to ask the reader to accompany us for a time to another part of the same house.

We have said there were several tenants: now the person who occupied the rooms next to those in which Mademoiselle de Guerchi lived was a shopkeeper's widow called Rapally, who was owner of one of the thirty-two houses which then occupied the bridge Saint-Michel. They had all been constructed at the owner's cost, in return for a lease for ever. The widow Rapally's avowed age was forty, but those who knew her longest added another ten years to that: so, to avoid error, let us say she was forty-five. She was a solid little body, rather stouter than was necessary for beauty; her hair was black, her complexion brown, her eyes prominent and always moving; lively, active, and if one once yielded to her whims, exacting beyond measure; but until then buxom and soft, and inclined to pet and spoil whoever, for the moment, had arrested her volatile fancy. Just as we make her acquaintance this happy individual was a certain Maître Quennebert, a notary of Saint Denis, and the comedy played between him and the widow was an exact counterpart of the one going on in the rooms of Mademoiselle de Guerchi, except that the rôles were

inverted; for while the lady was as much in love as the Duc de Vitry, the answering devotion professed by the notary was as insincere as the disinterested attachment to her lover displayed by the whilom maid of honour.

Maître Quennebert was still young and of attractive appearance, but his business affairs were in a bad way. For long he had been pretending not to understand the marked advances of the widow, and he treated her with a reserve and respect she would fain have dispensed with, and which sometimes made her doubt of his love. But it was impossible for her as a woman to complain, so she was forced to accept with resignation the persistent and unwelcome consideration with which he surrounded her. Maître Quennebert was a man of common sense and much experience, and had formed a scheme which he was prevented from carrying out by an obstacle which he had no power to remove. He wanted, therefore, to gain time, for he knew that the day he gave the susceptible widow a legal right over him he would lose his independence. A lover to whose prayers the adored one remains deaf too long is apt to draw back in discouragement, but a woman whose part is restricted to awaiting those prayers, and answering with a yes or no, necessarily learns patience. Maître Quennebert would therefore have felt no anxiety as to the effect of his dilatoriness on the widow, were it not for the existence of a distant cousin of the late Monsieur Rapally, who was also paying court to her, and that with a warmth much greater than had hitherto been displayed by himself. This fact, in view of the state of the notary's affairs, forced him at last to display more energy. To make up lost ground and to outdistance his rival once more, he now began to dazzle the widow with fine phrases and delight her with compliments; but to tell the truth all this trouble was superfluous; he was beloved, and with one fond look he might have won pardon for far greater neglect.

An hour before the treasurer's arrival there had been a knock at the door of the old house, and Maître Quennebert, curled, pomaded, and prepared for conquest, had presented himself at the widow's. She received him with a more

languishing air than usual, and shot such arrows at him from her eyes that to escape a fatal wound he pretended to give way by degrees to deep sadness. The widow, becoming alarmed, asked with tenderness—

"What ails you this evening?"

He rose, feeling he had nothing to fear from his rival, and, being master of the field, might henceforth advance or recede as seemed best for his interests.

"What ails me?" he repeated, with a deep sigh. "I might deceive you, might give you a misleading answer, but to you I cannot lie. I am in great trouble, and how to get out of it I don't know."

"But tell me what it is," said the widow, standing up in her turn.

Maître Quennebert took three long strides, which brought him to the far end of the room, and asked—

"Why do you want to know? You can't help me. My trouble is of a kind a man does not generally confide to women."

"What is it? An affair of honour?"

"Yes."

"Good God! You are going to fight!" she exclaimed, trying to seize him by the arm. "You are going to fight!"

"Ah! if it were nothing worse than that!" said Quennebert, pacing up and down the room: "but you need not be alarmed; it is only a money trouble. I lent a large sum, a few months ago, to a friend, but the knave has run away and left me in the lurch. It was trust money, and must be replaced within three days. But where am I to get two thousand francs?"

"Yes, that is a large sum, and not easy to raise at such short notice."

"I shall be obliged to have recourse to some Jew, who will drain me dry. But I must save my good name at all costs."

Madame Rapally gazed at him in consternation. Maître Quennebert, divining her thought, hastened to add—

"I have just one-third of what is needed."

"Only one-third?"

"With great care, and by scraping together all I possess, I can make up eight hundred livres. But may I be damned in the next world, or punished as a swindler in this, and one's as bad as the other to me, if I can raise one farthing more."

"But suppose someone should lend you the twelve hundred francs, what then?"

"*Pardieu!* I should accept them," cried the notary, as if he had not the least suspicion whom she could mean. "Do you happen to know anyone, my dear Madame Rapally?"

The widow nodded affirmatively, at the same time giving him a passionate glance.

"Tell me quick the name of this delightful person, and I shall go to him to-morrow morning. You don't know what a service you are rendering me! And I was so near not telling you of the fix I was in, lest you should torment yourself uselessly. Tell me his name."

"Can you not guess it?"

"How should I guess it?"

"Think well. Does no one occur to you?"

"No, no one," said Quennebert, with the utmost innocence.

"Have you no friends?"

"One or two."

"Would they not be glad to help you?"

"They might. But I have mentioned the matter to no one."

"To no one?"

"Except you."

"Well?"

"Well, Madame Rapally—I hope I don't understand you; it's not possible; you would not humiliate me. Come, come, it's a riddle, and I am too stupid to solve it. I give it up. Don't tantalise me any longer; tell me the name."

The widow, somewhat abashed by this exhibition of delicacy on the part of Maître Quennebert, blushed, cast down her eyes, and did not venture to speak.

As the silence lasted some time, it occurred to the notary that he had been perhaps too hasty in his supposition, and he

began to cast round for the best means of retrieving his blunder.

"You do not speak," he said; "I see it was all a joke."

"No," said the widow at last in a timid voice, "it was no joke; I was quite in earnest. But the way you take things is not very encouraging."

"What do you mean?"

"Pray, do you imagine that I can go on while you glare at me with that angry frown puckering your forehead, as if you had someone before you who had tried to insult you?"

A sweet smile chased the frown from the notary's brow. Encouraged by the suspension of hostilities, Madame Rapally with sudden boldness approached him, and, pressing one of his hands in both her own, whispered—

"It is I who am going to lend you the money."

He repulsed her gently, but with an air of great dignity, and said—

"Madame, I thank you, but I cannot accept."

"Why can't you?"

At this he began to walk round and round the room, while the widow, who stood in the middle, turned as upon a pivot, keeping him always in view. This circus-ring performance lasted some minutes before Quennebert stood still and said—

"I cannot be angry with you, Madame Rapally,—I know your offer was made out of the kindness of your heart,—but I must repeat that it is impossible for me to accept it."

"There you go again! I don't understand you at all! Why can't you accept? What harm would it do?"

"If there were no other reason, because people might suspect that I confided my difficulties to you in the hope of help."

"And supposing you did, what then? People speak hoping to be understood. You wouldn't have minded asking anyone else."

"So you really think I did come in that hope?"

"*Mon Dieu!* I don't think anything at all that you don't want. It was I who dragged the confidence from you by my

questions, I know that very well. But now that you have told me your secret, how can you hinder me from sympathising with you, from desiring to aid you? When I learned your difficulty, ought I to have been amused, and gone into fits of laughter? What! it's an insult to be in a position to render you a service! That's a strange kind of delicacy!"

"Are you astonished that I should feel so strongly about it?"

"Nonsense! Do you still think I meant to offend you? I look on you as the most honourable man in the world. If anyone were to tell me that he had seen you commit a base action, I should reply that it was a lie. Does that satisfy you?"

"But suppose they got hold of it in the city, suppose it were reported that Maître Quennebert had taken money from Madame de Rapally, would it be the same as if they said Maître Quennebert had borrowed twelve hundred livres from Monsieur Robert or some other business man?"

"I don't see what difference it could make."

"But I do."

"What then?"

"It's not easy to express, but——"

"But you exaggerate both the service and the gratitude you ought to feel. I think I know why you refuse. You're ashamed to take it as a gift, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, I'm not going to make you a gift. Borrow twelve hundred livres from me. For how long do you want the money?"

"I really don't know how soon I can repay you."

"Let's say a year, and reckon the interest. Sit down there, you baby, and write out a promissory note."

Maître Quennebert made some further show of resistance, but at last yielded to the widow's importunity. It is needless to say that the whole thing was a comedy on his part, except that he really needed the money. But he did not need it to replace a sum of which a faithless friend had robbed him,

but to satisfy his own creditors, who, out of all patience with him, were threatening to sue him, and his only reason for seeking out Madame de Rapally was to take advantage of her generous disposition towards himself. His feigned delicacy was intended to induce her to insist so urgently, that in accepting he should not fall too much in her esteem, but should seem to yield to force. And his plan met with complete success, for at the end of the transaction he stood higher than ever in the opinion of his fair creditor, on account of the noble sentiments he had expressed. The note was written out in legal form and the money counted down on the spot.

"How glad I am!" said she then, while Quennebert still kept up some pretence of delicate embarrassment, although he could not resist casting a stolen look at the bag of crowns lying on the table beside his cloak. "Do you intend to go back to Saint Denis to-night?"

Even had such been his intention, the notary would have taken very good care not to say so; for he foresaw the accusations of imprudence that would follow, the enumeration of the dangers by the way; and it was quite on the cards even that, having thus aroused his fears, his fair hostess should in deference to them offer him hospitality for the night, and he did not feel inclined for an indefinitely prolonged *tête-à-tête*.

"No," he said, "I am going to sleep at Maître Terrasson's, rue des Poitevins; I have sent him word to expect me. But although his house is only a few yards distant, I must leave you earlier than I could have wished, on account of this money."

"Will you think of me?"

"How can you ask?" replied Quennebert, with a sentimental expression. "You have compelled me to accept the money, but I shall not be happy till I have repaid you. Suppose this loan should make us fall out?"

"You may be quite sure that if you don't pay when the bill falls due, I shall have recourse to the law."

"Oh, I know that very well."

"I shall enforce all my rights as a creditor."

"I expect nothing else."

"I shall show no pity."

And the widow gave a saucy laugh and shook her finger at him.

"Madame Rapally," said the notary, who was most anxious to bring this conversation to an end, dreading every moment that it would take a languishing tone,—"Madame Rapally, will you add to your goodness by granting me one more favour?"

"What is it?"

"The gratitude that is simulated is not difficult to bear, but genuine, sincere gratitude, such as I feel, is a heavy burden, as I can assure you. It is much easier to give than to receive. Promise me, then, that from now till the year is up there shall be no more reference between us to this money, and that we shall go on being good friends as before. Leave it to me to make arrangements to acquit myself honourably of my obligations towards you. I need say no more; till a year's up, mum's the word."

"It shall be as you desire, Maître Quennebert," answered Madame Rapally, her eyes shining with delight. "It was never my intention to lay you under embarrassing obligations, and I leave it all to you. Do you know that I am beginning to believe in presentiments?"

"You becoming superstitious! Why, may I ask?"

"I refused to do a nice little piece of ready-money business this morning."

"Did you?"

"Yes, because I had a sort of feeling that made me resist all temptation to leave myself without cash. Imagine! I received a visit to-day from a great lady who lives in this house—in the suite of apartments next to mine."

"What is her name?"

"Mademoiselle de Guerchi."

"And what did she want with you?"

"She called in order to ask me to buy, for four hundred livres, some of her jewels which are well worth six hundred, for I understand such things; or should I prefer it to lend her that sum and keep the jewels as security? It appears that

mademoiselle is in great straits. De Guerchi—do you know the name?"

"I think I have heard it."

"They say she has had a stormy past, and has been greatly talked of; but then half of what one hears is lies. Since she came to live here she has been very quiet. No visitors except one — a nobleman, a duke — wait a moment! What's his name? The Duc—Duc de Vitry; and for over three weeks even he hasn't been near her. I imagine from this absence that they have fallen out, and that she is beginning to feel the want of money."

"You seem to be intimately acquainted with this young woman's affairs."

"Indeed I am, and yet I never spoke to her till this morning."

"How did you get your information, then?"

"By chance. The room adjoining this and one of those she occupies were formerly one large room, which is now divided into two by a partition wall covered with tapestry; but in the two corners the plaster has crumbled away with time, and one can see into the room through slits in the tapestry without being seen oneself. Are you inquisitive?"

"Not more than you, Madame Rapally."

"Come with me. Someone knocked at the street door a few moments ago; there's no one else in the house likely to have visitors at this hour. Perhaps her admirer has come back."

"If so, we are going to witness a scene of recrimination or of reconciliation. How delightful!"

Although he was not leaving the widow's lodgings, Maître Quennebert took up his hat and cloak and the blessed bag of crown pieces, and followed Madame Rapally on tiptoe, who on her side moved as slowly as a tortoise and as lightly as she could. They succeeded in turning the handle of the door into the next room without making much noise.

"'Sh!" breathed the widow softly; "listen, they are speaking."

She pointed to the place where he would find a peep-hole in one corner of the room, and crept herself towards the corresponding corner. Quennebert, who was by no means anxious to have her at his side, motioned to her to blow out the light. This being done, he felt secure, for he knew that in the intense darkness which now enveloped them she could not move from her place without knocking against the furniture between them, so he glued his face to the partition. An opening just large enough for one eye allowed him to see everything that was going on in the next room. Just as he began his observations, the treasurer at Mademoiselle de Guerchi's invitation was about to take a seat near her, but not too near for perfect respect. Both of them were silent, and appeared to labour under great embarrassment at finding themselves together, and explanations did not readily begin. The lady had not an idea of the motive of the visit, and her quondam lover feigned the emotion necessary to the success of his undertaking. Thus Maître Quennebert had full time to examine both, and especially Angélique. The reader will doubtless desire to know what was the result of the notary's observation.

CHAPTER III

ANGÉLIQUE-LOUISE DE GUERCHI was a woman of about twenty-eight years of age, tall, dark, and well made. The loose life she had led had, it is true, somewhat staled her beauty, marred the delicacy of her complexion, and coarsened the naturally elegant curves of her figure; but it is such women who from time immemorial have had the strongest attraction for profligate men. It seems as if dissipation destroyed the power to perceive true beauty, and the man of pleasure must be aroused to admiration by a bold glance and a meaning smile, and will only seek satisfaction along the trail left by vice. Louise-Angélique was admirably adapted for her way of life; not that her features wore an expression of shameless effrontery, or that the words that passed her lips bore habitual testimony to the disorders of her existence, but that under a calm and sedate demeanour there lurked a secret and indefinable charm. Many other women possessed more regular features, but none of them had a greater power of seduction. We must add that she owed that power entirely to her physical perfections, for except in regard to the devices necessary to her calling, she showed no cleverness, being ignorant, dull and without inner resources of any kind. As her temperament led her to share the desires she excited, she was really incapable of resisting an attack conducted with skill and ardour, and if the Duc de Vitry had not been so madly in love, which is the same as saying that he was hopelessly blind, silly, and dense to everything around him, he might have found a score of opportunities to overcome her resistance. We have already seen that she was so straitened in money matters that she had been driven to try to sell her jewels that very morning.

Jeannin was the first to break silence.

"You are astonished at my visit, I know, my charming Angélique. But you must excuse my thus appearing so unexpectedly before you. The truth is, I found it impossible to leave Paris without seeing you once more."

"Thank you for your kind remembrance," said she, "but I did not at all expect it."

"Come, come, you are offended with me."

She gave him a glance of mingled disdain and resentment; but he went on, in a timid, wistful tone—

"I know that my conduct must have seemed strange to you, and I acknowledge that nothing can justify a man for suddenly leaving the woman he loves—I do not dare to say the woman who loves him—without a word of explanation. But, dear Angélique, I was jealous."

"Jealous!" she repeated incredulously.

"I tried my best to overcome the feeling, and I hid my suspicions from you. Twenty times I came to see you bursting with anger and determined to overwhelm you with reproaches, but at the sight of your beauty I forgot everything but that I loved you. My suspicions dissolved before a smile; one word from your lips charmed me into happiness. But when I was again alone my terrors revived, I saw my rivals at your feet, and rage possessed me once more. Ah! you never knew how devotedly I loved you."

She let him speak without interruption; perhaps the same thought was in her mind as in Quennebert's, who, himself a past master in the art of lying, was thinking—

"The man does not believe a word of what he is saying."

But the treasurer went on—

"I can see that even now you doubt my sincerity."

"Does my lord desire that his handmaiden should be blunt? Well, I know that there is no truth in what you say."

"Oh! I can see that you imagine that among the distractions of the world I have kept no memory of you, and have found consolation in the love of less obdurate fair ones. I have not broken in on your retirement; I have not shadowed

your steps; I have not kept watch on your actions; I have not surrounded you with spies who would perhaps have brought me the assurance, 'If she quitted the world which outraged her, she was not driven forth by an impulse of wounded pride or noble indignation; she did not even seek to punish those who misunderstood her by her absence; she buried herself where she was unknown, that she might indulge in stolen loves.' Such were the thoughts that came to me, and yet I respected your hiding-place; and to-day I am ready to believe you true, if you will merely say, 'I love no one else!'"

Jeannin, who was as fat as a stage financier, paused here to gasp; for the utterance of this string of banalities, this rigmarole of commonplaces, had left him breathless. He was very much dissatisfied with his performance, and ready to curse his barren imagination. He longed to hit upon swelling phrases and natural and touching gestures, but in vain. He could only look at Mademoiselle de Guerchi with a miserable, heart-broken air. She remained quietly seated, with the same expression of incredulity on her features.

So there was nothing for it but to go on once more.

"But this one assurance that I ask you will not give. So what I have been told is true: you have given your love to him."

She could not check a startled movement.

"You see it is only when I speak of him that I can overcome in you the insensibility which is killing me. My suspicions were true after all: you deceived me for his sake. Oh! the instinctive feeling of jealousy was right which forced me to quarrel with that man, to reject the perfidious friendship which he tried to force upon me. He has returned to town, and we shall meet! But why do I say 'returned'? Perhaps he only pretended to go away, and safe in this retreat has flouted with impunity, my despair and braved my vengeance!"

Up to this the lady had played a waiting game, but now she grew quite confused, trying to discover the thread of the treasurer's thoughts. To whom did he refer? The Duc de Vitry? That had been her first impression. But the duke had only been acquainted with her for a few months—since

she had left Court. He could not therefore have excited the jealousy of her whilom lover; and if it were not he, to whom did the words about rejecting "perfidious friendship," and "returned to town," and so on, apply? Jeannin divined her embarrassment, and was not a little proud of the tactics which would, he was almost sure, force her to expose herself. For there are certain women who can be thrown into cruel perplexity by speaking to them of their love-passages without affixing a proper name as label to each. They are placed as it were on the edge of an abyss, and forced to feel their way in darkness. To say "You have loved" almost obliges them to ask "Whom?"

Nevertheless, this was not the word uttered by Mademoiselle de Guerchi while she ran through in her head a list of possibilities. Her answer was—

"Your language astonishes me; I don't understand what you mean."

The ice was broken, and the treasurer made a plunge. Seizing one of Angélique's hands, he asked—

"Have you never seen Commander de Jars since then?"

"Commander de Jars!" exclaimed Angélique.

"Can you swear to me, Angélique, that you love him not?"

"*Mon Dieu!* What put it into your head that I ever cared for him? It's over four months since I saw him last, and I hadn't an idea whether he was alive or dead. So he has been out of town? That's the first I heard of it."

"My fortune is yours, Angélique! Oh! assure me once again that you do not love him—that you never loved him!" he pleaded in a faltering voice, and fixing a look of painful anxiety upon her.

He had no intention of putting her out of countenance by the course he took; he knew quite well that a woman like Angélique is never more at her ease than when she has a chance of telling an untruth of this nature. Besides, he had prefaced this appeal by the magic words, "My fortune is yours!" and the hope thus aroused was well worth a perjury. So she answered boldly and in a steady voice, while she looked straight into his eyes—

"Never!"

"I believe you!" exclaimed Jeannin, going down on his knees and covering with his kisses the hand he still held. "I can taste happiness again. Listen, Angélique. I am leaving Paris; my mother is dead, and I am going back to Spain. Will you follow me thither?"

"I?—follow you?"

"I hesitated long before finding you out, so much did I fear a repulse. I set out to-morrow. Quit Paris, leave the world which has slandered you, and come with me. In a fortnight we shall be man and wife."

"You are not in earnest!"

"May I expire at your feet if I am not! Do you want me to sign the oath with my blood?"

"Rise," she said in a broken voice. "Have I at last found a man to love me and compensate me for all the abuse that has been showered on my head? A thousand times I thank you, not for what you are doing for me, but for the balm you pour on my wounded spirit. Even if you were to say to me now, 'After all, I am obliged to give you up,' the pleasure of knowing you esteem me would make up for all the rest. It would be another happy memory to treasure along with my memory of our love, which was ineffaceable, although you so ungratefully suspected me of having deceived you."

The treasurer appeared fairly intoxicated with joy. He indulged in a thousand ridiculous extravagances and exaggerations, and declared himself the happiest of men. Mademoiselle de Guerchi, who was desirous of being prepared for every peril, asked him in a coaxing tone—

"Who can have put it into your head to be jealous of the commander? Has he been base enough to boast that I ever gave him my love?"

"No, he never said anything about you; but someway I was afraid."

She renewed her assurances. The conversation continued some time in a sentimental tone. A thousand oaths, a thousand protestations of love were exchanged. Jeannin feared that the

suddenness of their journey would inconvenience his mistress, and offered to put it off for some days; but to this she would not consent, and it was arranged that the next day at noon a carriage should call at the house and take Angélique out of town to an appointed place at which the treasurer was to join her.

Maître Quennebert, eye and ear on the alert, had not lost a word of this conversation, and the last proposition of the treasurer changed his ideas.

"*Pardieu!*" he said to himself, "it looks as if this good man were really going to let himself be taken in and done for. It is singular how very clear-sighted we can be about things that don't touch us. This poor fly is going to let himself be caught by a very clever spider, or I'm much mistaken. Very likely my widow is quite of my opinion, and yet in what concerns herself she will remain stone-blind. Well, such is life! We have only two parts to choose between: we must be either knave or fool. What's Madame Rapally doing, I wonder?"

At this moment he heard a stifled whisper from the opposite corner of the room, but, protected by the distance and the darkness, he let the widow murmur on, and applied his eye once more to his peep-hole. What he saw confirmed his opinion. The damsel was springing up and down, laughing, gesticulating, and congratulating herself on her unexpected good fortune.

"Just imagine! He loves me like that!" she was saying to herself. "Poor Jeannin! When I remember how I used to hesitate—— How fortunate that Commander de Jars, one of the most vain and indiscreet of men, never babbled about me! Yes, we must leave town to-morrow without fail. I must not give him time to be enlightened by a chance word. But the Duc de Vitry——? I am really sorry for him. However, why did he go away, and send no word? And then, he's a married man. Ah! if I could only get back again to court some day! . . . Who would ever have expected such a thing? Good God! I must keep talking to myself, to be sure I'm not dreaming. Yes, he was there, just now, at my feet, saying to me, 'Angélique, you are going to become my wife.' One thing is sure, he may safely entrust his honour to my care. It would be infamous to

betray a man who loves me as he does, who will give me his name. Never, no, never will I give him cause to reproach me! I would rather——"

A loud and confused noise on the stairs interrupted this soliloquy. At one moment bursts of laughter were heard, and the next angry voices. Then a loud exclamation, followed by a short silence. Being alarmed at this disturbance in a house which was usually so quiet, Mademoiselle de Guerchi approached the door of her room, intending either to call for protection or to lock herself in, when suddenly it was violently pushed open. She recoiled with fright, exclaiming—

"Commander de Jars!"

"On my word!" said Quennebert behind the arras, "'tis as amusing as a play! Is the commander also going to offer to make an honest woman of her? But what do I see——?"

He had just caught sight of the young man on whom de Jars had bestowed the title and name of Chevalier de Moranges, and whose acquaintance the reader has already made at the tavern in the rue Saint-André-des-Arts. His appearance had as great an effect on the notary as a thunderbolt. He stood motionless, trembling, breathless; his knees ready to give way beneath him; everything black before his eyes. However, he soon pulled himself together, and succeeded in overcoming the effects of his surprise and terror. He looked once more through the hole in the partition, and became so absorbed that no one in the whole world could have got a word from him just then; the devil himself might have shrieked into his ears unheeded, and a naked sword suspended over his head would not have induced him to change his place.

CHAPTER IV

BEFORE Mademoiselle de Guerchi had recovered from her fright the commander spoke.

"As I am a gentleman, my beauty, if you were the Abbess of Montmartre you could not be more difficult of access. I met a blackguard on the stairs who tried to stop me, and whom I was obliged to thrash soundly. Is what they told me on my return true? Are you really doing penance, and do you intend to take the veil?"

"Sir," answered Angélique, with great dignity, "whatever may be my plans, I have a right to be surprised at your violence and at your intrusion at such an hour."

"Before we go any farther," said de Jars, twirling round on his heels, "allow me to present to you my nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges."

"Chevalier de Moranges!" muttered Quennebert, on whose memory in that instant the name became indelibly engraven.

"A young man," continued the commander, "who has come back with me from abroad. Good style, as you see, charming appearance. Now, you young innocent, lift up your great black eyes and kiss madame's hand; I allow it."

"Monsieur le commandeur, leave my room; begone, or I shall call——"

"Whom, then? Your lackeys? But I have beaten the only one you keep, as I told you, and it will be some time before he'll be in a condition to light me downstairs. 'Begone,' indeed! Is that the way you receive an old friend? Pray be seated, chevalier."

He approached Mademoiselle de Guerchi, and, despite her

resistance, seized hold of one of her hands, and forcing her to sit down, seated himself beside her.

"That's right, my girl," said he; "now let us talk sense. I understand that before a stranger you consider yourself obliged to appear astonished at my ways of going on. But he knows all about us, and nothing he may see or hear will surprise him. So a truce to prudery! I came back yesterday, but I could not make out your hiding-place till to-day. Now I'm not going to ask you to tell me how you have gone on in my absence. God and you alone know, and while He will tell me nothing, you would only tell me fibs, and I want to save you from that venial sin at least. But here I am, in as good spirits as ever, more in love than ever, and quite ready to resume my old habits."

Meantime the lady, quite subdued by his noisy entrance and ruffianly conduct, and seeing that an assumption of dignity would only draw down on her some fresh impertinence, appeared to resign herself to her position. All this time Quennebert never took his eyes from the chevelier, who sat with his face towards the partition. His elegantly cut costume accentuated his personal advantages. His jet black hair brought into relief the whiteness of his forehead; his large dark eyes with their veined lids and silky lashes had a pene trating and peculiar expression—a mixture of audacity and weakness; his thin and somewhat pale lips were apt to curl in an ironical smile; his hands were of perfect beauty, his feet of dainty smallness, and he showed with an affectation of complaisance a well-turned leg above his ample boots, the turned down tops of which, garnished with lace, fell in irregular folds over his ankles in the latest fashion. He did not appear to be more than eighteen years of age, and nature had denied his charming face the distinctive sign of his sex, for not the slightest down was visible on his chin, though a little delicate pencilling darkened his upper lip. His slightly effeminate style of beauty, the graceful curves of his figure, his expression, sometimes coaxing, sometimes saucy, reminding one of a page, gave him the appearance of a charming young scrapegrace destined to

inspire sudden passions and wayward fancies. While his pretended uncle was making himself at home most unceremoniously, Quennebert remarked that the chevalier at once began to lay siege to his fair hostess, bestowing tender and love-laden glances on her behind that uncle's back. This redoubled his curiosity.

"My dear girl," said the commander, "since I saw you last I have come into a fortune of one hundred thousand livres, neither more nor less. One of my dear aunts took it into her head to depart this life, and her temper being crotchety and spiteful she made me her sole heir, in order to enrage those of her relatives who had nursed her in her illness. One hundred thousand livres! It's a round sum—enough to cut a great figure with for two years. If you like, we shall squander it together, capital and interest. Why do you not speak? Has anyone else robbed me by any chance of your heart? If that were so, I should be in despair, upon my word—for the sake of the fortunate individual who had won your favour; for I will brook no rivals, I give you fair warning."

"Monsieur le commandeur," answered Angélique, "you forget, in speaking to me in that manner, I have never given you any right to control my actions."

"Have we severed our connection?"

At this singular question Angélique started, but de Jars continued—

"When last we parted we were on the best of terms, were we not? I know that some months have elapsed since then, but I have explained to you the reason of my absence. Before filling up the blank left by the departed we must give ourselves space to mourn. Well, was I right in my guess? Have you given me a successor?"

Mademoiselle de Guerchi had hitherto succeeded in controlling her indignation, and had tried to force herself to drink the bitter cup of humiliation to the dregs; but now she could bear it no longer. Having thrown a look expressive of her suffering at the young chevalier, who continued to ogle her with great pertinacity, she decided on bursting into tears, and

in a voice broken by sobs she exclaimed that she was miserable at being treated in this manner, that she did not deserve it, and that Heaven was punishing her for her error in yielding to the entreaties of the commander. One would have sworn she was sincere and that the words came from her heart. If Maître Quennebert had not witnessed the scene with Jeannin, if he had not known how frail was the virtue of the weeping damsel, he might have been affected by her touching plaint. The chevalier appeared to be deeply moved by Angélique's grief, and while his uncle was striding up and down the room and swearing like a trooper, he gradually approached her and expressed by signs the compassion he felt.

Meantime the notary was in a strange state of mind. He had not yet made up his mind whether the whole thing was a joke arranged between de Jars and Jeannin or not, but of one thing he was quite convinced, the sympathy which Chevalier de Moranges was expressing by passionate sighs and glances was the merest hypocrisy. Had he been alone, nothing would have prevented his dashing head foremost into this imbroglio, in scorn of consequence, convinced that his appearance would be as terrible in its effect as the head of Medusa. But the presence of the widow restrained him. Why ruin his future and dry up the golden spring which had just begun to gush before his eyes, for the sake of taking part in a melodrama? Prudence and self-interest kept him in the side scenes.

The tears of the fair one and the glances of the chevalier awoke no repentance in the breast of the commander; on the contrary, he began to vent his anger in terms still more energetic. He strode up and down the oaken floor till it shook under his spurred heels; he stuck his plumed hat on the side of his head, and displayed the manners of a bully in a Spanish comedy. Suddenly he seemed to have come to a swift resolution: the expression of his face changed from rage to icy coldness, and walking up to Angélique, he said, with a composure more terrible than the wildest fury—

"My rival's name?"

"You shall never learn it from me!"

"Madame, his name?"

"Never! I have borne your insults too long. I am not responsible to you for my actions."

"Well, I shall learn it, in spite of you, and I know to whom to apply. Do you think you can play fast and loose with me and my love? No, no! I used to believe in you; I turned a deaf ear to your traducers. My mad passion for you became known; I was the jest and the butt of the town. But you have opened my eyes, and at last I see clearly on whom my vengeance ought to fall. He was formerly my friend, and I would believe nothing against him; although I was often warned, I took no notice. But now I will seek him out, and say to him, 'You have stolen what was mine; you are a scoundrel! It must be your life or mine!' And if there is justice in heaven, I shall kill him! Well, madame, you don't ask me the name of this man! You well know whom I mean!"

This threat brought home to Mademoiselle de Guerchi how imminent was her danger. At first she had thought the commander's visit might be a snare laid to test her, but the coarseness of his expressions, the cynicism of his overtures in the presence of a third person, had convinced her she was wrong. No man could have imagined that the revolting method of seduction employed could meet with success, and if the commander had desired to convict her of perfidy he would have come alone and made use of more persuasive weapons. No, he believed he still had claims on her, but even if he had, by his manner of enforcing them he had rendered them void. However, the moment he threatened to seek out a rival whose identity he designated quite clearly, and reveal to him the secret it was so necessary to her interests to keep hidden, the poor girl lost her head. She looked at de Jars with a frightened expression, and said in a trembling voice—

"I don't know whom you mean."

"You don't know? Well, I shall commission the king's treasurer, Jeannin de Castille, to come here to-morrow and tell you, an hour before our duel."

"Oh no! no! Promise me you will not do that!" cried she, clasping her hands.

"Adieu, madame."

"Do not leave me thus! I cannot let you go till you give me your promise!"

She threw herself on her knees and clung with both her hands to de Jars' cloak, and appealing to Chevalier de Moranges, said—

"You are young, monsieur; I have never done you any harm; protect me, have pity on me, help me to soften him!"

"Uncle," said the chevalier in a pleading tone, "be generous, and don't drive this woman to despair."

"Prayers are useless!" answered the commander.

"What do you want me to do?" said Angélique. "Shall I go into a convent to atone? I am ready to go. Shall I promise never to see him again? For God's sake, give me a little time; put off your vengeance for one single day! To-morrow evening, I swear to you, you will have nothing more to fear from me. I thought myself forgotten by you and abandoned; and how should I think otherwise? You left me without a word of farewell, you stayed away and never sent me a line! And how do you know that I did not weep when you deserted me, leaving me to pass my days in monotonous solitude? How do you know that I did not make every effort to find out why you were so long absent from my side? You say you had left town—but how was I to know that? Oh! promise me, if you love me, to give up this duel! Promise me not to seek that man out to-morrow!"

The poor creature hoped to work wonders with her eloquence, her tears, her pleading glances. On hearing her prayer for a reprieve of twenty-four hours, swearing that after that she would never see Jeannin again, the commander and the chevalier were obliged to bite their lips to keep from laughing outright. But the former soon regained his self-possession, and while Angélique, still on her knees before him, pressed his hands to her bosom, he forced her to raise her head, and looking straight into her eyes, said—

"To-morrow, madame, if not this evening, he shall know everything, and a meeting shall take place."

Then pushing her away, he strode towards the door.

"Oh! how unhappy I am!" exclaimed Angélique.

She tried to rise and rush after him, but whether she was really overcome by her feelings, or whether she felt the one chance of prevailing left her was to faint, she uttered a heartrending cry, and the chevalier had no choice but to support her sinking form.

De Jars, on seeing his nephew staggering under this burden, gave a loud laugh, and hurried away. Two minutes later he was once more at the tavern in the rue Saint-André-des-Arts.

"How's this? Alone?" said Jeannin.

"Alone."

"What have you done with the chevalier?"

"I left him with our charmer, who was unconscious, overcome with grief, exhausted—— Ha! ha! ha! She fell fainting into his arms! Ha! ha! ha!"

"It's quite possible that the young rogue, being left with her in such a condition, may cut me out."

"Do you think so?—Ha! ha! ha!"

And de Jars laughed so heartily and so infectiously that his worthy friend was obliged to join in, and laughed till he choked.

In the short silence which followed the departure of the commander, Maître Quennebert could hear the widow still murmuring something, but he was less disposed than ever to attend to her.

"On my word," said he, "the scene now going on is more curious than all that went before. I don't think that a man has ever found himself in such a position as mine. Although my interests demand that I remain here and listen, yet my fingers are itching to box the ears of that Chevalier de Moranges. If there were only some way of getting at a proof of all this! Ah! now we shall hear something; the hussy is coming to herself."

And indeed Angélique had opened her eyes and was casting wild looks around her; she put her hand to her brow several times, as if trying to recall clearly what had happened.

"Is he gone?" she exclaimed at last. "Oh, why did you let him go? You should not have minded me, but kept him here."

"Be calm," answered the chevalier,—"be calm, for heaven's sake. I shall speak to my uncle and prevent his ruining your prospects. Only don't weep any more, your tears break my heart. Ah, my God! how cruel it is to distress you so! I should never be able to withstand your tears; no matter what reason I had for anger, a look from you would make me forgive you everything."

"Noble young man!" said Angélique.

"Idiot!" muttered Maître Quennebert; "swallow the honey of his words, do—— But how the deuce is it going to end? Not Satan himself ever invented such a situation."

"But then I could never believe you guilty without proof, irrefutable proof; and even then a word from you would fill my mind with doubt and uncertainty again. Yes, were the whole world to accuse you and swear to your guilt, I should still believe your simple word. I am young, madam, I have never known love as yet—until an instant ago I had no idea that more quickly than an image can excite the admiration of the eye, a thought can enter the heart and stir it to its depths, and features that one may never again behold leave a lifelong memory behind. But even if a woman of whom I knew absolutely nothing were to appeal to me, exclaiming, 'I implore your help, your protection!' I should, without stopping to consider, place my sword and my arm at her disposal, and devote myself to her service. How much more eagerly would I die for you, madam, whose beauty has ravished my heart! What do you demand of me? Tell me what you desire me to do."

"Prevent this duel; don't allow an interview to take place between your uncle and the man whom he mentioned. Tell me you will do this, and I shall be safe; for you have never learned to lie, I know."

"Of course he hasn't, you may be sure of that, you simpleton!" muttered Maître Quennebert in his corner. "If you only knew what a mere novice you are at that game compared with the chevalier! If you only knew whom you had before you!"

"At your age," went on Angélique, "one cannot feign—the heart is not yet hardened, and is capable of compassion. But a dreadful idea occurs to me—a horrible suspicion! Is it all a devilish trick—a snare arranged in joke? Tell me that it is not all a pretence! A poor woman encounters so much perfidy. Men amuse themselves by troubling her heart and confusing her mind; they excite her vanity, they compass her round with homage, with flattery, with temptation, and when they grow tired of fooling her, they despise and insult her. Tell me, was this all a preconcerted plan? This love, this jealousy, were they only acted?"

"Oh, madame," broke in the chevalier, with an expression of the deepest indignation, "how can you for an instant imagine that a human heart could be so perverted? I am not acquainted with the man whom the commander accused you of loving, but whoever he may be I feel sure that he is worthy of your love, and that he would never have consented to such a dastardly joke. Neither would my uncle; his jealousy mastered him and drove him mad—— But I am not dependent on him; I am my own master, and can do as I please. I will hinder this duel; I will not allow the illusion and ignorance of him who loves you and, alas that I must say it, whom you love, to be dispelled, for it is in them he finds his happiness. Be happy with him! As for me, I shall never see you again; but the recollection of this meeting, the joy of having served you, will be my consolation."

Angélique raised her beautiful eyes, and gave the chevalier a long look which expressed her gratitude more eloquently than words.

"May I be hanged!" thought Maître Quennebert, "if the baggage isn't making eyes at him already! But one who is drowning clutches at a straw."

"Enough, madam," said the chevalier; "I understand all you would say. You thank me in his name, and ask me to leave you: I obey—yes, madame, I am going; at the risk of my life I will prevent this meeting, I will stifle this fatal revelation. But grant me one last prayer—permit me to look forward to

seeing you once more before I leave this city, to which I wish I had never come. But I shall quit it in a day or two, to-morrow perhaps—as soon as I know that your happiness is assured. Oh! do not refuse my last request; let the light of your eyes shine on me for the last time; after that I shall depart—I shall fly far away for ever. But if perchance, in spite of every effort, I fail, if the commander's jealousy should make him impervious to my entreaties—to my tears, if he whom you love should come and overwhelm you with reproaches and then abandon you, would you drive me from your presence if I should then say, 'I love you'? Answer me, I beseech you."

"Go!" said she, "and prove worthy of my gratitude—or my love."

Seizing one of her hands, the chevalier covered it with passionate kisses.

"Such barefaced impudence surpasses everything I could have imagined!" murmured Quennebert: "fortunately, the play is over for to-night; if it had gone on any longer, I should have done something foolish. The lady hardly imagines what the end of the comedy will be."

Neither did Quennebert. It was an evening of adventures. It was written that in the space of two hours Angélique was to run the gamut of all the emotions, experience all the vicissitudes to which a life such as she led is exposed: hope, fear, happiness, mortification, falsehood, love that was no love, intrigue within intrigue, and, to crown all, a totally unexpected conclusion.

CHAPTER V

THE chevalier was still holding Angélique's hand when a step resounded outside, and a voice was heard.

"Can it be that he has come back?" exclaimed the damsel, hastily freeing herself from the passionate embrace of the chevalier. "It's not possible! *Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* it's his voice!"

She grew pale to the lips, and stood staring at the door with outstretched arms, unable to advance or recede.

The chevalier listened, but felt sure the approaching voice belonged neither to the commander nor to the treasurer.

"'His voice'?" thought Quennebert to himself. "Can this be yet another aspirant to her favour?"

The sound came nearer.

"Hide yourself!" said Angélique, pointing to a door opposite to the partition behind which the widow and the notary were ensconced. "Hide yourself there!—there's a secret staircase —you can get out that way."

"I hide myself!" exclaimed Moranges, with a swaggering air. "What are you thinking of? I remain."

It would have been better for him to have followed her advice, as may very well have occurred to the youth two minutes later, as a tall, muscular young man entered in a state of intense excitement. Angélique rushed to meet him, crying—

"Ah! Monsieur le duc, is it you?"

"What is this I hear, Angélique?" said the Duc de Vitry. "I was told below that three men had visited you this evening; but only two have gone out—where is the third? Ha! I do not need long to find him," he added, as he caught sight of the chevalier, who stood his ground bravely enough.

"In Heaven's name!" cried Angélique,—"in Heaven's name, listen to me!"

"No, no, not a word. Just now I am not questioning you. Who are you, sir?"

The chevalier's teasing and bantering disposition made him even at that critical moment insensible to fear, so he retorted insolently—

"Whoever I please to be, sir; and on my word I find the tone in which you put your question delightfully amusing."

The duke sprang forward in a rage, laying his hand on his sword. Angélique tried in vain to restrain him.

"You want to screen him from my vengeance, you false one!" said he, retreating a few steps, so as to guard the door. "Defend your life, sir!"

"Do you defend yours!"

Both drew at the same moment.

Two shrieks followed, one in the room, the other behind the tapestry, for neither Angélique nor the widow had been able to restrain her alarm as the two swords flashed in air. In fact the latter had been so frightened that she fell heavily to the floor in a faint.

This incident probably saved the young man's life; his blood had already begun to run cold at the sight of his adversary foaming with rage and standing between him and the door, when the noise of the fall distracted the duke's attention.

"What was that?" he cried. "Are there other enemies concealed here too?" And forgetting that he was leaving a way of escape free, he rushed in the direction from which the sound came, and lunged at the tapestry-covered partition with his sword. Meantime the chevalier, dropping all his airs of bravado, sprang from one end of the room to the other like a cat pursued by a dog; but rapid as were his movements, the duke perceived his flight, and dashed after him at the risk of breaking both his own neck and the chevalier's by a chase through unfamiliar rooms and down stairs which were plunged in darkness.

All this took place in a few seconds, like a flash of lightning. Twice, with hardly any interval, the street door opened and shut noisily, and the two enemies were in the street, one pursued and the other pursuing.

"My God! Just to think of all that has happened is enough to make one die of fright!" said Mademoiselle de Guerchi. "What will come next, I should like to know? And what shall I say to the duke when he comes back?"

Just at this instant a loud cracking sound was heard in the room. Angélique stood still, once more struck with terror, and recollecting the cry she had heard. Her hair, which was already loosened, escaped entirely from its bonds, and she felt it rise on her head as the figures on the tapestry moved and bent towards her. Falling on her knees and closing her eyes, she began to invoke the aid of God and all the saints. But she soon felt herself raised by strong arms, and looking round, she found herself in the presence of an unknown man, who seemed to have issued from the ground or the walls, and who, seizing the only light left unextinguished in the scuffle, dragged her more dead than alive into the next room.

This man was, as the reader will have already guessed, Maître Quennebert. As soon as the chevalier and the duke had disappeared, the notary had run towards the corner where the widow lay, and having made sure that she was really unconscious, and unable to see or hear anything, so that it would be quite safe to tell her any story he pleased next day, he returned to his former position, and applying his shoulder to the partition, easily succeeded in freeing the ends of the rotten laths from the nails which held them, and, pushing them before him, made an aperture large enough to allow of his passing through into the next apartment. He applied himself to this task with such vigour, and became so absorbed in its accomplishment, that he entirely forgot the bag of twelve hundred livres which the widow had given him.

"Who are you? What do you want with me?" cried Mademoiselle de Guerchi, struggling to free herself.

"Silence!" was Quennebert's answer.

"Don't kill me, for pity's sake!"

"Who wants to kill you? But be silent; I don't want your shrieks to call people here. I must be alone with you for a few moments. Once more I tell you to be quiet, unless you want me to use violence. If you do what I tell you, no harm shall happen to you."

"But who are you, monsieur?"

"I am neither a burglar nor a murderer; that's all you need to know; the rest is no concern of yours. Have you writing materials at hand?"

"Yes, monsieur; there they are, on that table."

"Very well. Now sit down at the table."

"Why?"

"Sit down, and answer my questions."

"The first man who visited you this evening was M. Jeannin, was he not?"

"Yes, M. Jeannin de Castille."

"The king's treasurer?"

"Yes."

"All right. The second was Commander de Jars, and the young man he brought with him was his nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges. The last comer was a duke; am I not right?"

"The Duc de Vitry."

"Now write from my dictation."

He spoke very slowly, and Mademoiselle de Guerchi, obeying his commands, took up her pen.

"'To-day,'" dictated Quennebert,—"'to-day, this twentieth day of the month of November, in the year of the Lord 1658, I——' What is your full name?"

"Angélique-Louise de Guerchi."

"Go on! 'I, Angélique-Louise de Guerchi, was visited, in the rooms which I occupy, in the mansion of the Duchesse d'Etampes, corner of the streets Gît-le-Cœur and du Hurepoix, about half-past seven o'clock in the evening, in the first place, by Messire Jeannin de Castille, King's Treasurer; in the second place, by Commander de Jars, who was accompanied by a young man, his nephew, the Chevalier de Moranges; in the

third place, after the departure of Commander de Jars, and while I was alone with the Chevalier de Moranges, by the Duc de Vitry, who drew his sword upon the said chevalier and forced him to take flight.'

"Now put in a line by itself, and use capitals—

"'DESCRIPTION OF THE CHEVALIER DE MORANGES.'"

"But I only saw him for an instant," said Angélique, "and I can't recall——"

"Write, and don't talk. I can recall everything, and that is all that is wanted.

"'Height about five feet.' The chevalier," said Quennebert, interrupting himself, "is four feet eleven inches three lines and a half, but I don't need absolute exactness." Angélique gazed at him in utter stupefaction.

"Do you know him, then?" she asked.

"I saw him this evening for the first time, but my eye is very accurate.

"'Height about five feet; hair black, eyes ditto, nose aquiline, mouth large, lips compressed, forehead high, face oval, complexion pale, no beard.'

"Now another line, and in capitals—

'SPECIAL MARKS.'

"'A small mole on the neck behind the right ear, a smaller mole on the left hand.'

"Have you written that? Now sign it with your full name."

"What use are you going to make of this paper?"

"I should have told you before, if I had desired you to know. Any questions are quite useless. I don't enjoin secrecy on you, however," added the notary, as he folded the paper and put it in his doublet pocket. "You are quite free to tell anyone you like that you have written the description of the Chevalier de Moranges at the dictation of an unknown man, who got into your room you don't know how, by the chimney

or through the ceiling perhaps, but who was determined to leave it by a more convenient road. Is there not a secret staircase? Show me where it is. I don't want to meet anyone on my way out."

Angélique pointed out a door to him hidden by a damask curtain, and Quennebert saluting her, opened it and disappeared, leaving Angélique convinced that she had seen the devil in person. Not until the next day did the sight of the displaced partition explain the apparition, but even then so great was her fright, so deep was the terror which the recollection of the mysterious man inspired, that despite the permission to tell what had happened she mentioned her adventure to no one, and did not even complain to her neighbour, Madame Rapally, of the inquisitiveness which had led the widow to spy on her actions.

CHAPTER VI

WE left de Jars and Jeannin, roaring with laughter, in the tavern in the rue Saint André-des-Arts.

"What!" said the treasurer, "do you really think that Angélique thought I was in earnest in my offer?—that she believes in all good faith I intend to marry her?"

"You may take my word for it. If it were not so, do you imagine she would have been in such desperation? Would she have fainted at my threat to tell you that I had claims on her as well as you? To get married! Why, that is the g[illegible]l of all such creatures, and there is not one of them who can understand why a man of honour should blush to give her his name. If you had only seen her terror, her tears! They would have either broken your heart or killed you with laughter."

"Well," said Jeannin, "it is getting late. Are we going to wait for the chevalier?"

"Let us call for him."

"Very well. Perhaps he has made up his mind to stay. If so, we shall make a horrible scene, cry treachery and perjury, and trounce your nephew well. Let's settle our score and be off."

They left the wine-shop, both rather the worse for the wine they had so largely indulged in. They felt the need of the cool night air, so instead of going down the rue Pavée they resolved to follow the rue Saint-André-des-Arts as far as the Pont Saint-Michel, so as to reach the mansion by a longer route.

At the very moment the commander got up to leave the tavern the chevalier had run out of the mansion at the top of

his speed. It was not that he had entirely lost his courage, for had he found it impossible to avoid his assailant it is probable that he would have regained the audacity which had led him to draw his sword. But he was a novice in the use of arms, had not yet reached full physical development, and felt that the chances were so much against him that he would only have faced the encounter if there were no possible way of escape. On leaving the house he had turned quickly into the rue Gît-le-Cœur; but on hearing the door close behind his pursuer he disappeared down the narrow and crooked rue de l'Hirondelle, hoping to throw the Duc de Vitry off the scent. The duke, however, though for a moment in doubt, was guided by the sound of the flying footsteps. The chevalier, still trying to send him off on a false trail, turned to the right, and so regained the upper end of the rue Saint-André, and ran along it as far as the church, the site of which is occupied by the square of the same name to-day. Here he thought he would be safe, for, as the church was being restored and enlarged, heaps of stone stood all round the old pile. He glided in among these, and twice heard Vitry searching quite close to him, and each time stood on guard expecting an onslaught. This marching and counter-marching lasted for some minutes; the chevalier began to hope he had escaped the danger, and eagerly waited for the moment when the moon which had broken through the clouds should again withdraw behind them, in order to steal into some of the adjacent streets under cover of the darkness. Suddenly a shadow rose before him and a threatening voice cried—

"Have I caught you at last, you coward?"

The danger in which the chevalier stood awoke in him a flickering energy, a feverish courage, and he crossed blades with his assailant. A strange combat ensued, of which the result was quite uncertain, depending entirely on chance; for no science was of any avail on a ground so rough that the combatants stumbled at every step, or struck against immovable masses, which were one moment clearly lit up, and the next in shadow. Steel clashed on steel, the feet of the adversaries

touched each other, several times the cloak of one was pierced by the sword of the other, more than once the words "Die then!" rang out. But each time the seemingly vanquished combatant sprang up unwounded, as agile and as lithe and as quick as ever, while he in his turn pressed the enemy home. There was neither truce nor pause, no clever feints nor fencer's tricks could be employed on either side; it was a mortal combat, but chance, not skill, would deal the death-blow. Sometimes a rapid pass encountered only empty air; sometimes blade crossed blade above the wielders' heads; sometimes the fencers lunged at each other's breast, and yet the blows glanced aside at the last moment and the blades met in air once more. At last, however, one of the two, making a pass to the right which left his breast unguarded, received a deep wound. Uttering a loud cry, he recoiled a step or two, but, exhausted by the effort, tripped and fell backward over a large stone, and lay there motionless, his arms extended in the form of a cross.

The other turned and fled.

"Hark, de Jars!" said Jeannin, stopping. "There's fighting going on hereabouts; I hear the clash of swords."

Both listened intently.

"I hear nothing now."

"Hush! there it goes again. It's by the church."

"What a dreadful cry!"

They ran at full speed towards the place whence it seemed to come, but found only solitude, darkness, and silence. They looked in every direction.

"I can't see a living soul," said Jeannin, "and I very much fear that the poor devil who gave that yell has mumbled his last prayer."

"I don't know why I tremble so," replied de Jars; "that heartrending cry made me shiver from head to foot. Was it not something like the chevalier's voice?"

"The chevalier is with La Guerchi, and even if he had left her this would not have been his way to rejoin us. Let us go on and leave the dead in peace."

"Look, Jeannin! what is that in front of us?"

Bourdet, del. *Boilly, sculp.*

THE DUEL BETWEEN THE DUC DE VITRY AND THE CHEVALIER DE MORANGES

"On that stone? A man who has fallen!"

"Yes, and bathed in blood," exclaimed de Jars, who had darted to his side. "Ah! it's he! it's he! Look, his eyes are closed, his hands cold! My child—he does not hear me! Oh, who has murdered him?"

He fell on his knees, and threw himself on the body with every mark of the most violent despair.

"Come, come," said Jeannin, surprised at such an explosion of grief from a man accustomed to duels, and who on several similar occasions had been far from displaying much tenderness of heart, "collect yourself, and don't give way like a woman. Perhaps the wound is not mortal. Let us try to stop the bleeding and call for help."

"No, no——"

"Are you mad?"

"Don't call, for Heaven's sake! The wound is here, near the heart. Your handkerchief, Jeannin, to arrest the flow of blood. There—now help me to lift him."

"What does that mean?" cried Jeannin, who had just laid his hand on the chevalier. "I don't know whether I'm awake or asleep! Why, it's a——"

"Be silent, on your life! I shall explain everything—but now be silent; there is someone looking at us."

There was indeed a man wrapped in a mantle standing motionless some steps away.

"What are you doing here?" asked de Jars.

"May I ask what you are doing, gentlemen?" retorted Maître Quennebert, in a calm and steady voice.

"Your curiosity may cost you dear, monsieur; we are not in the habit of allowing our actions to be spied on."

"And I am not in the habit of running useless risks, most noble cavaliers. You are, it is true, two against one; but," he added, throwing back his cloak and grasping the hilts of a pair of pistols stuck in his belt, "these will make us equal. You are mistaken as to my intentions. I had no thought of playing the spy; it was chance alone that led me here; and you must acknowledge that finding you in this lonely spot, engaged

as you are at this hour of the night, was quite enough to awake the curiosity of a man as little disposed to provoke a quarrel as to submit to threats."

"It was chance also that brought us here. We were crossing the square, my friend and I, when we heard groans. We followed the sound, and found this young gallant, who is a stranger to us, lying here, with a wound in his breast."

As the moon at that moment gleamed doubtfully forth, Maître Quennebert bent for an instant over the body of the wounded man, and said—

"I know him no more than you. But supposing someone were to come upon us here, we might easily be taken for three assassins holding a consultation over the corpse of our victim. What were you going to do?"

"Take him to a doctor. It would be inhuman to leave him here, and while we are talking precious time is being lost."

"Do you belong to this neighbourhood?"

"No," said the treasurer.

"Neither do I," said Quennebert, "but I believe I have heard the name of a surgeon who lives close by, in the rue Hauteville."

"I also know of one," interposed de Jars, "a very skilful man."

"You may command me."

"Gladly, monsieur; for he lives some distance from here."

"I am at your service."

De Jars and Jeannin raised the chevalier's shoulders, and the stranger supported his legs, and carrying their burden in this order, they set off.

They walked slowly, looking about them carefully, a precaution rendered necessary by the fact that the moon now rode in a cloudless sky. They glided over the Pont Saint-Michel between the houses that lined both sides, and, turning to the right, entered one of the narrow streets of the Cité, and after many turnings, during which they met no one, they stopped at the door of a house situated behind the Hôtel-de-Ville.

"Many thanks, monsieur," said de Jars,—"many thanks; we need no further help."

Bourdet, del. *Bailly, sculp.*

THE CHEVALIER DE MORANGES CARRIED TO THE HOUSE OF LA CONSTANTIN

As the commander spoke, Maître Quennebert let the feet of the chevalier fall abruptly on the pavement, while de Jars and the treasurer still supported his body, and, stepping back two paces, he drew his pistols from his belt, and placing a finger on each trigger, said—

"Do not stir, messieurs, or you are dead men."

Both, although encumbered by their burden, laid their hands upon their swords.

"Not a movement, not a sound, or I shoot."

There was no reply to this argument, it being a convincing one even for two duellists. The bravest man turns pale when he finds himself face to face with sudden inevitable death, and he who threatened seemed to be one who would, without hesitation, carry out his threats. There was nothing for it but obedience, or a ball through them as they stood.

"What do you want with us, sir?" asked Jeannin.

Quennebert, without changing his attitude, replied—

"Commander de Jars, and you, Messire Jeannin de Castille, king's treasurer,—you see, my gentles, that besides the advantage of arms which strike swiftly and surely, I have the further advantage of knowing who you are, whilst I am myself unknown,—you will carry the wounded man into this house, into which I will not enter, for I have nothing to do within; but I shall remain here, to await your return. After you have handed over the patient to the doctor, you will procure paper and write—now pay great attention—that on November 20th, 1658, about midnight, you, aided by an unknown man, carried to this house, the address of which you will give, a young man whom you call the Chevalier de Moranges, and pass off as your nephew——"

"As he really is."

"Very well."

"But who told you——?"

"Let me go on: who had been wounded in a fight with swords on the same night behind the church of Saint-André-des-Arts by the Duc de Vitry."

"The Duc de Vitry!—How do you know that?"

"No matter how, I know it for a fact. Having made this declaration, you will add that the said Chevalier de Moranges is no other than Joséphine-Charlotte Boullenois, whom you, commander, abducted four months ago from the convent of La Raquette, whom you have made your mistress, and whom you conceal disguised as a man; then you will add your signature. Is my information correct?"

De Jars and Jeannin were speechless with surprise for a few instants; then the former stammered—

"Will you tell us who you are?"

"The devil in person, if you like. Well, will you do as I order? Supposing that I am awkward enough not to kill you at two paces, do you want me to ask you in broad daylight and aloud what I now ask at night and in a whisper? And don't think to put me off with a false declaration, relying on my not being able to read it by the light of the moon; don't think either that you can take me by surprise when you hand it me: you will bring it to me with your swords sheathed as now. If this condition is not observed, I shall fire, and the noise will bring a crowd about us. To-morrow I shall speak differently from to-day: I shall proclaim the truth at all the street corners, in the squares, and under the windows of the Louvre. It is hard, I know, for men of spirit to yield to threats, but recollect that you are in my power and that there is no disgrace in paying a ransom for a life that one cannot defend. What do you say?"

In spite of his natural courage, Jeannin, who found himself involved in an affair from which he had nothing to gain, and who was not at all desirous of being suspected of having helped in an abduction, whispered to the commander—

"Faith! I think our wisest course is to consent."

De Jars, however, before replying, wished to try if he could by any chance throw his enemy off his guard for an instant, so as to take him unawares. His hand still rested on the hilt of his sword, motionless, but ready to draw.

"There is someone coming over yonder," he cried,—"do you hear?"

"You can't catch me in that way," said Quennebert. "Even were there anyone coming, I should not look round, and if you move your hand all is over with you."

"Well," said Jeannin, "I surrender at discretion—not on my own account, but out of regard for my friend and this woman. However, we are entitled to some pledge of your silence. This statement that you demand, once written,—you can ruin us to-morrow by its means."

"I don't yet know what use I shall make of it, gentlemen. Make up your minds, or you will have nothing but a dead body to place in the doctor's hands. There is no escape for you."

For the first time the wounded man faintly groaned.

"I must save her!" cried de Jars,—"I yield."

"And I swear upon my honour that I will never try to get this woman out of your hands, and that I will never interfere with your conquest. Knock, gentlemen, and remain as long as may be necessary. I am patient. Pray to God, if you will, that she may recover; my one desire is that she may die."

They entered the house, and Quennebert, wrapping himself once more in his mantle, walked up and down before it, stopping to listen from time to time. In about two hours the commander and the treasurer came out again, and handed him a written paper in the manner agreed on.

"I greatly fear that it will be a certificate of death," said de Jars.

"Heaven grant it, commander! Adieu, messieurs."

He then withdrew, walking backwards, keeping the two friends covered with his pistols until he had placed a sufficient distance between himself and them to be out of danger of an attack.

The two gentlemen on their part walked rapidly away, looking round from time to time, and keeping their ears open. They were very much mortified at having been forced to let a mere boor dictate to them, and anxious, especially de Jars, as to the result of the wound.

CHAPTER VII

ON the day following this extraordinary series of adventures, explanations between those who were mixed up in them, whether as actors or spectators, were the order of the day. It was not till Maître Quennebert reached the house of the friend who had offered to put him up for the night that it first dawned on him, that the interest which the Chevalier de Moranges had awakened in his mind had made him utterly forget the bag containing the twelve hundred livres which he owed to the generosity of the widow. This money being necessary to him, he went back to her early next morning. He found her hardly recovered from her terrible fright. Her swoon had lasted far beyond the time when the notary had left the house; and as Angélique, not daring to enter the bewitched room, had taken refuge in the most distant corner of her apartments, the feeble call of the widow was heard by no one. Receiving no answer, Madame Rapally groped her way into the next room, and finding that empty, buried herself beneath the bedclothes, and passed the rest of the night dreaming of drawn swords, duels, and murders. As soon as it was light she ventured into the mysterious room once more, without calling her servants, and found the bag of crowns lying open on the floor, with the coins scattered all around, the partition broken, and the tapestry hanging from it in shreds. The widow was near fainting again: she imagined at first she saw stains of blood everywhere, but a closer inspection having somewhat reassured her, she began to pick up the coins that had rolled to right and left, and was agreeably surprised to find the tale complete. But how and why had Maître Quennebert abandoned them? What had become of him? She had got

lost in the most absurd suppositions and conjectures when the notary appeared. Discovering from the first words she uttered that she was in complete ignorance of all that had taken place, he explained to her that when the interview between the chevalier and Mademoiselle de Guerchi had just at the most interesting moment been so unceremoniously interrupted by the arrival of the duke, he had become so absorbed in watching them that he had not noticed that the partition was bending before the pressure of his body, and that just as the duke drew his sword it suddenly gave way, and he, Quennebert, being thus left without support, tumbled head foremost into the next room, among a perfect chaos of overturned furniture and lamps; that almost before he could rise he was forced to draw in self-defence, and had to make his escape, defending himself against both the duke and the chevalier; that they had pursued him so hotly, that when he found himself free he was too far from the house and the hour was too advanced to admit of his returning. Quennebert added innumerable protestations of friendship, devotion, and gratitude, and, furnished with his twelve hundred crowns, went away, leaving the widow reassured as to his safety, but still shaken from her fright.

While the notary was thus soothing the widow, Angélique was exhausting all the expedients her trade had taught her in the attempt to remove the duke's suspicions. She asserted she was the victim of an unforeseen attack which nothing in her conduct had ever authorised. The young Chevalier de Moranges had gained admittance, she declared, under the pretext that he brought her news from the duke, the one man who occupied her thoughts, the sole object of her love. The chevalier had seen her lover, he said, a few days before, and by cleverly appearing to things back, he had led her to fear that the duke had grown tired of her, and that a new conquest was the cause of his absence. She had not believed these insinuations, although his long silence would have justified the most mortifying suppositions, the most cruel doubts. At length the chevalier had grown bolder, and had declared his passion for her;

whereupon she had risen and ordered him to leave her. Just at that moment the duke had entered, and had taken the natural agitation and confusion of the chevalier as signs of her guilt. Some explanation was also necessary to account for the presence of the two other visitors of whom he had been told below stairs. As he knew nothing at all about them, the servant who admitted them never having seen either of them before, she acknowledged that two gentlemen had called earlier in the evening; that they had refused to send in their names, but as they had said they had come to inquire about the duke, she suspected them of having been in league with the chevalier in the attempt to ruin her reputation, perhaps they had even promised to help him to carry her off, but she knew nothing positive about them or their plans. The duke, contrary to his wont, did not allow himself to be easily convinced by these lame explanations, but unfortunately for him the lady knew how to assume an attitude favourable to her purpose. She had been induced, she said, with the simple confidence born of love, to listen to people who had led her to suppose they could give her news of one so dear to her as the duke. From this falsehood she proceeded to bitter reproaches: instead of defending herself, she accused him of having left her a prey to anxiety; she went so far as to imply that there must be some foundation for the hints of the chevalier, until at last the duke, although he was not guilty of the slightest infidelity, and had excellent reasons to give in justification of his silence, was soon reduced to a penitent mood, and changed his threats into entreaties for forgiveness. As to the shriek he had heard, and which he was sure had been uttered by the stranger who had forced his way into her room after the departure of the others, she asserted that his ears must have deceived him. Feeling that therein lay her best chance of making things smooth, she exerted herself to convince him that there was no need for other information than she could give, and did all she could to blot the whole affair from his memory; and her success was such that at the end of the interview the duke was more

enamoured and more credulous than ever, and believing he had done her wrong, he delivered himself up to her, bound hand and foot. Two days later he installed his mistress in another dwelling.

Madame Rapally also resolved to give up her rooms, and removed to a house that belonged to her on the Pont Saint-Michel.

The commander took the condition of Charlotte Boullenois very much to heart. The physician under whose care he had placed her, after examining her wounds, had not given much hope of her recovery. It was not that de Jars was capable of a lasting love, but Charlotte was young and possessed great beauty, and the romance and mystery surrounding their connection gave it piquancy. Charlotte's disguise, too, which enabled de Jars to conceal his success and yet flaunt it in the face, as it were, of public morality and curiosity, charmed him by its audacity, and above all he was carried away by the bold and uncommon character of the girl, who, not content with a prosaic intrigue, had trampled underfoot all social prejudices and proprieties, and plunged at once into unmeasured and unrestrained dissipation; the singular mingling in her nature of the vices of both sexes; the unbridled licentiousness of the courtesan coupled with the devotion of a man for horses, wine, and fencing; in short, her eccentric character, as it would now be called, kept a passion alive which would else have quickly died away in his *blasé* heart. Nothing would induce him to follow Jeannin's advice to leave Paris for at least a few weeks, although he shared Jeannin's fear that the statement they had been forced to give the stranger would bring them into trouble. The treasurer, who had no love affair on hand, went off; but the commander bravely held his ground, and at the end of five or six days, during which no one disturbed him, began to think the only result of the incident would be the anxiety it had caused him.

Every evening as soon as it was dark he betook himself to the doctor's, wrapped in his cloak, armed to the teeth, and his hat pulled down over his eyes. For two days and nights,

Charlotte, whom to avoid confusion we shall continue to call the Chevalier de Moranges, hovered between life and death. Her youth and the strength of her constitution enabled her at last to overcome the fever, in spite of the want of skill of the surgeon Perregaud.

Although de Jars was the only person who visited the chevalier, he was not the only one who was anxious about the patient's health. Maître Quennebert, or men engaged by him to watch, for he did not want to attract attention, were always prowling about the neighbourhood, so that he was kept well informed of everything that went on. The instructions he gave to these agents were, that if a funeral should leave the house, they were to find out the name of the deceased, and then to let him know without delay. But all these precautions seemed quite useless: he always received the same answer to all his questions, "We know nothing." So at last he determined to address himself directly to the man who could give him information on which he could rely.

One night the commander left the surgeon's feeling more cheerful than usual, for the chevalier had passed a good day, and there was every hope that he was on the road to complete recovery. Hardly had de Jars gone twenty paces when someone laid a hand on his shoulder. He turned and saw a man whom, in the darkness, he did not recognise.

"Excuse me for detaining you, Commander de Jars," said Quennebert, "but I have a word to say to you."

"Ah! so it's you, sir," replied the commander. "Are you going at last to give me the opportunity I was so anxious for?"

"I don't understand."

"We are on more equal terms this time; to-day you don't catch me unprepared, almost without weapons, and if you are a man of honour you will measure swords with me."

"Fight a duel with you! why, may I ask? You have never insulted me."

"A truce to pleasantry, sir; don't make me regret that I have shown myself more generous than you. I might have killed you just now had I wished. I could have put my pistol

to your breast and fired, or said to you, 'Surrender at discretion!' as you so lately said to me."

"And what use would that have been?"

"It would have made a secret safe that you ought never to have known."

"It would have been the most unfortunate thing for you that could have happened, for if you had killed me the paper would have spoken. So! you think that if you were to assassinate me you would only have to stoop over my dead body and search my pockets, and, having found the incriminating document, destroy it. You seem to have formed no very high opinion of my intelligence and common sense. You of the upper classes don't need these qualities, the law is on your side. But when a humble individual like myself, a mere nobody, undertakes to investigate a piece of business about which those in authority are not anxious to be enlightened, precautions are necessary. It's not enough for him to have right on his side, he must, in order to secure his own safety, make good use of his skill, courage, and knowledge. I have no desire to humiliate you a second time, so I will say no more. The paper is in the hands of my notary, and if a single day passes without his seeing me he has orders to break the seal and make the contents public. So you see chance is still on my side. But now that you are warned there is no need for me to bluster. I am quite prepared to acknowledge your superior rank, and if you insist upon it, to speak to you uncovered."

"What do you desire to know, sir?"

"How is the Chevalier de Moranges getting on?"

"Very badly, very badly."

"Take care, commander; don't deceive me. One is so easily tempted to believe what one hopes, and I hope so strongly that I dare not believe what you say. I saw you coming out of the house, not at all with the air of a man who had just heard bad news. Quite the contrary: you looked at the sky, and rubbed your hands, and walked with a light, quick step, that did not speak of grief."

"You're a sharp observer, sir."

"I have already explained to you, sir, that when one of us belonging to a class hardly better than serfs succeeds by chance or force of character in getting out of the narrow bounds in which he was born, he must keep both eyes and ears open. If I had doubted your word as you have doubted mine on the merest suspicion, you would have said to your servants, 'Chastise this rascal.' But I am obliged to prove to you that you did not tell me the truth. Now I am sure that the chevalier is out of danger."

"If you were so well informed why did you ask me?"

"I only knew it by your asserting the contrary."

"What do you mean?" cried de Jars, who was growing restive under this cold, satirical politeness.

"Do me justice, commander. The bit chafes, but yet you must acknowledge that I have a light hand. For a full week you have been in my power. Have I disturbed your quiet? Have I betrayed your secret? You know I have not. And I shall continue to act in the same manner. I hope with all my heart, however great would be your grief, that the chevalier may die of his wound. I have not the same reasons for loving him that you have, so much you can readily understand, even if I do not explain the cause of my interest in his fate. But in such a matter hopes count for nothing; they cannot make his temperature either rise or fall. I have told you I have no wish to force the chevalier to resume his real name. I may make use of the document and I may not, but if I am obliged to use it I shall give you warning. Will you, in return, swear to me upon your honour that you will keep me informed as to the fate of the chevalier, whether you remain in Paris or whether you leave? But let this agreement be a secret between us, and do not mention it to the so-called Moranges."

"I have your oath, monsieur, that you will give me notice before you use the document I have given you against me, have I? But what guarantee have I that you will keep your word?"

"My course of action till to-day, and the fact that I have pledged you my word of my own free will."

"I see, you hope not to have long to wait for the end."

"I hope not; but meantime a premature disclosure would do me as much harm as you. I have not the slightest rancour against you, commander; you have robbed me of no treasure; I have therefore no compensation to demand. What you place such value on would be only a burden to me, as it will be to you later on. All I want is, to know as soon as it is no longer in your possession, whether it has been removed by the will of God or by your own. I am right in thinking that to-day there is some hope of the chevalier's recovery, am I not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you give me your promise that if ever he leave this house safe and sound you will let me know?"

"I give you my promise."

"And if the result should be different, you will also send me word?"

"Certainly. But to whom shall I address my message?"

"I should have thought that since our first meeting you would have found out all about me, and that to tell you my name would be superfluous. But I have no reason to hide it: Maître Quennebert, notary, Saint-Denis. I will not detain you any longer now, commander; excuse a simple citizen for dictating conditions to a noble such as you. For once chance has been on my side, although a score of times it has gone against me."

De Jars made no reply except a nod, and walked away quickly, muttering words of suppressed anger between his teeth at all the humiliations to which he had been obliged to submit so meekly.

"He's as insolent as a varlet who has no fear of a larruping before his eyes: how the rapscallion gloried in taking advantage of his position! Taking off his hat while putting his foot on my neck! If ever I can be even with you, my worthy scrivener, you'll pass a very bad quarter of an hour, I can tell you."

Everyone has his own idea of what constitutes perfect honour. De Jars, for instance, would have allowed himself to be cut up into little pieces rather than have broken the promise he had given Quennebert a week ago, because it was given in exchange

for his life, and the slightest paltering with his word under those circumstances would have been dastardly. But the engagement into which he had just entered had in his eyes no such moral sanction; he had not been forced into it by threats, he had escaped by its means no serious danger, and therefore in regard to it his conscience was much more accommodating. What he should best have liked to do would have been to have sought out the notary and provoked him by insults to send him a challenge. That a clown such as that could have any chance of leaving the ground alive never entered his head. But willingly as he would have compassed his death in this manner, the knowledge that his secret would not die with Quennebert restrained him, for when everything came out he felt that the notary's death would be regarded as an aggravation of his original offence, and in spite of his rank he was not at all certain that if he were put on his trial even now he would escape scot free, much less if a new offence were added to the indictment. So, however much he might chafe against the bit, he felt he must submit to the bridle.

"By God!" said he, "I know what the clodhopper is after; and even if I must suffer in consequence, I shall take good care that he cannot shake off his bonds. Wait a bit! I can play the detective too, and be down on him without letting him see the hand that deals the blows. It'll be a wonder if I can't find a naked sword to suspend above *his* head."

However, while thus brooding over projects of vengeance, Commander de Jars kept his word, and about a month after the interview above related he sent word to Quennebert that the Chevalier de Moranges had left Perregaud's completely recovered from his wound. But the nearly fatal result of the chevalier's last prank seemed to have subdued his adventurous spirit; he was no longer seen in public, and was soon forgotten by all his acquaintances with the exception of Mademoiselle de Guerchi. She faithfully treasured up the memory of his words of passion, his looks of love, the warmth of his caresses, although at first she struggled hard to chase his image from her heart. But as the Duc de Vitry assured her that he had killed

him on the spot, she considered it no breach of faith to think lovingly of the dead, and while she took the goods so bounteously provided by her living lover, her gentlest thoughts, her most enduring regrets, were given to one whom she never hoped to see again.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH the reader's permission, we must now jump over an interval of rather more than a year, and bring upon the stage a person who, though only of secondary importance, can no longer be left behind the scenes.

We have already said that the loves of Quennebert and Madame Rapally were regarded with a jealous eye by a distant cousin of the lady's late husband. The love of this rejected suitor, whose name was Trumeau, was no more sincere than the notary's, nor were his motives more honourable. Although his personal appearance was not such as to lead him to expect that his path would be strewn with conquests, he considered that his charms at least equalled those of his defunct relative; and it may be said that in thus estimating them he did not lay himself open to the charge of overweening vanity. But however persistently he preened himself before the widow, she vouchsafed him not one glance. Her heart was filled with the love of his rival, and it is no easy thing to tear a rooted passion out of a widow's heart when that widow's age is forty-six, and she is silly enough to believe that the admiration she feels is equalled by the admiration she inspires, as the unfortunate Trumeau found to his cost. All his carefully prepared declarations of love, all his skilful insinuations against Quennebert, brought him nothing but scornful rebuffs. But Trumeau was nothing if not persevering, and he could not habituate himself to the idea of seeing the widow's fortune pass into other hands than his own, so that every baffled move only increased his determination to spoil his competitor's game. He was always on the watch for a chance to carry tales to the widow, and so absorbed did he become in this fruitless pursuit, that he grew

yellower and more dried up from day to day, and to his jaundiced eye the man who was at first simply his rival became his mortal enemy and the object of his implacable hate, so that at length merely to get the better of him, to outwit him, would, after so long-continued and obstinate a struggle and so many defeats, have seemed to him too mild a vengeance, too incomplete a victory.

Quennebert was well aware of the zeal with which the indefatigable Trumeau sought to injure him. But he regarded the manœuvres of his rival with supreme unconcern, for he knew that he could at any time sweep away the network of cunning machinations, underhand insinuations, and malicious hints, which was spread around him, by allowing the widow to confer on him the advantages she was so anxious to bestow. The goal, he knew, was within his reach, but the problem he had to solve was how to linger on the way thither, how to defer the triumphal moment, how to keep hope alive in the fair one's breast and yet delay its fruition. His affairs were in a bad way. Day by day full possession of the fortune thus dangled before his eyes, and fragments of which came to him occasionally by way of loan, was becoming more and more indispensable, and tantalising though it was, yet he dared not put out his hand to seize it. His creditors dunned him relentlessly: one final reprieve had been granted him, but that at an end, if he could not meet their demands, it was all up with his career and reputation.

One morning in the beginning of February 1660, Trumeau called to see his cousin. He had not been there for nearly a month, and Quennebert and the widow had begun to think that, hopeless of success, he had retired from the contest. But, far from that, his hatred had grown more intense than ever, and having come upon the traces of an event in the past life of his rival which if proved would be the ruin of that rival's hopes, he set himself to gather evidence. He now made his appearance with beaming looks, which expressed a joy too great for words. He held in one hand a small scroll tied with a ribbon. He found the widow alone, sitting in a large easy-chair before the fire. She was reading for the twentieth time a letter

which Quennebert had written her the evening before. To judge by the happy and contented expression of the widow's face, it must have been couched in glowing terms. Trumeau guessed at once from whom the missive came, but the sight of it, instead of irritating him, called forth a smile.

"Ah! so it's you, cousin?" said the widow, folding the precious paper and slipping it into the bosom of her dress. "How do you do? It's a long time since I saw you, more than a fortnight, I think. Have you been ill?"

"So you remarked my absence! That is very flattering, my dear cousin; you do not often spoil me by such attentions. No, I have not been ill, thank God, but I thought it better not to intrude upon you so often. A friendly call now and then such as to-day's is what you like, is it not? By the way, tell me about your handsome suitor, Maître Quennebert; how is he getting along?"

"You look very knowing, Trumeau: have you heard of anything happening to him?"

"No, and I should be exceedingly sorry to hear that anything unpleasant had happened to him."

"Now you are not saying what you think, you know you can't bear him."

"Well, to speak the truth, I have no great reason to like him. If it were not for him, I should perhaps have been happy to-day; my love might have moved your heart. However, I have become resigned to my loss, and since your choice has fallen on him,"—and here he sighed,—"well, all I can say is, I hope you may never regret it."

"Many thanks for your goodwill, cousin; I am delighted to find you in such a benevolent mood. You must not be vexed because I could not give you the kind of love you wanted; the heart, you know, is not amenable to reason."

"There is only one thing I should like to ask."

"What is it?"

"I mention it for your good more than for my own. If you want to be happy, don't let this handsome quill-driver get you entirely into his hands. You are saying to yourself that because

of my ill-success with you I am trying to injure him; but what if I could prove that he does not love you as much as he pretends——?"

"Come, come, control your naughty tongue! Are you going to begin backbiting again? You are playing a mean part, Trumeau. I have never hinted to Maître Quennebert all the nasty little ways in which you have tried to put a spoke in his wheel, for if he knew he would ask you to prove your words, and then you would look very foolish."

"Not at all, I swear to you. On the contrary, if I were to tell all I know in his presence, it is not I who would be disconcerted. Oh! I am weary of meeting with nothing from you but snubs, scorn, and abuse. You think me a slanderer when I say, 'This gallant wooer of widows does not love you for yourself but for your money-bags. He fools you by fine promises, but as to marrying you—never, never!'"

"May I ask you to repeat that?" broke in Madame Rapally.

"Oh! I know what I am saying. You will never be Madame Quennebert."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Jealousy has eaten away whatever brains you used to possess, Trumeau. Since I saw you last, cousin, important changes have taken place: I was just going to send you to-day an invitation to my wedding."

"To your wedding?"

"Yes; I am to be married to-morrow."

"To-morrow? To Quennebert?" stammered Trumeau.

"To Quennebert," repeated the widow in a tone of triumph.

"It's not possible!" exclaimed Trumeau.

"It is so possible that you will see us united to-morrow. And for the future I must beg of you to regard Quennebert no longer as a rival but as my husband, whom to offend will be to offend me."

The tone in which these words were spoken no longer left room for doubt as to the truth of the news. Trumeau looked down for a few moments, as if reflecting deeply before definitely

making up his mind. He twisted the little roll of papers between his fingers, and seemed to be in doubt whether to open it and give it to Madame Rapally to read or not. In the end, however, he put it in his pocket, rose, and approaching his cousin, said—

"I beg your pardon, this news completely changes my opinion. From the moment Maître Quennebert becomes your husband I shall not have a word to say against him. My suspicions were unjust, I confess it frankly, and I hope that in consideration of the motives which prompted me you will forget the warmth of my attacks. I shall make no protestations, but shall let the future show how sincere is my devotion to your interests."

Madame Rapally was too happy, too certain of being loved, not to pardon easily. With the self-complacency and factitious generosity of a woman who feels herself the object of two violent passions, she was so good as to feel pity for the lover who was left out in the cold, and offered him her hand. Trumeau kissed it with every outward mark of respect, while his lips curled unseen in a smile of mockery. The cousins parted, apparently the best of friends, and on the understanding that Trumeau would be present at the nuptial benediction, which was to be given in a church beyond the town hall, near the house in which the newly-married couple were to live; the house on the Pont Saint-Michel having lately been sold to great advantage.

"On my word," said Trumeau, as he went off, "it would have been a great mistake to have spoken. I have got that wretch of a Quennebert into my clutches at last; and there is nobody but himself to blame. He is taking the plunge of his own free will, there is no need for me to shove him off the precipice."

The ceremony took place next day. Quennebert conducted his interesting bride to the altar, she hung with ornaments like the shrine of a saint, and, beaming all over with smiles, looked so ridiculous that the handsome bridegroom reddened to the roots of his hair with shame. Just as they entered the church, a coffin, on which lay a sword, and which was followed by a

single mourner, who from his manners and dress seemed to belong to the class of nobles, was carried in by the same door. The wedding guests drew back to let the funeral pass on, the living giving precedence to the dead. The solitary mourner glanced by chance at Quennebert, and started as if the sight of him was painful.

"What an unlucky meeting!" murmured Madame Rapally; "it is sure to be a bad omen."

"It's sure to be the exact opposite," said Quennebert, smiling.

The two ceremonies took place simultaneously in two adjoining chapels; the funeral dirges which fell on the widow's ear full of sinister prediction seemed to have quite another meaning for Quennebert, for his features lost their look of care, his wrinkles smoothed themselves out, till the guests, among whom was Trumeau, who did not suspect the secret of his relief from suspense, began to believe, despite their surprise, that he was really rejoiced at obtaining legal possession of the charming Madame Rapally.

As for her, she fleeted the daylight hours by anticipating the joyful moment when she would have her husband all to herself. When night came, hardly had she entered the nuptial chamber than she uttered a piercing shriek. She had just found and read a paper, left on the bed by Trumeau, who before leaving had contrived to glide into the room unseen. Its contents were of terrible import, so terrible that the new-made wife fell unconscious to the ground.

Quennebert, who, without a smile, was absorbed in reflections on the happiness at last within his grasp, heard the noise from the next room, and rushing in, picked up his wife. Catching sight of the paper, he also uttered a cry of anger and astonishment, but in whatever circumstances he found himself he was never long uncertain how to act. Placing Madame Quennebert, still unconscious, on the bed, he called her maid, and, having impressed on her that she was to take every care of her mistress, and above all to tell her from him as soon as she came to herself that there was no cause for alarm, he left the house at once. An hour later, in spite of the efforts of the servants, he

forced his way into the presence of Commander de Jars. Holding out the fateful document to him, he said—

"Speak openly, commander! Is it you who in revenge for your long constraint have done this? I can hardly think so, for after what has happened you know that I have nothing to fear any longer. Still, knowing my secret and unable to do it in any other way, have you perchance taken your revenge by an attempt to destroy my future happiness by sowing dissension and disunion between me and my wife?"

The commander solemnly assured him that he had had no hand in bringing about the discovery.

"Then if it's not you, it must be a worthless being called Trumeau, who, with the unerring instinct of jealousy, has run the truth to earth. But he knows only half: I have never been either so much in love or so stupid as to allow myself to be trapped. I have given you my promise to be discreet and not to misuse my power, and as long as was compatible with my own safety I have kept my word. But now you must see that I am bound to defend myself, and to do that I shall be obliged to summon you as a witness. So leave Paris to-night and seek out some safe retreat where no one can find you, for to-morrow I shall speak. Of course if I am quit for a woman's tears, if no more difficult task lies before me than to soothe a weeping wife, you can return immediately; but if, as is too probable, the blow has been struck by the hand of a rival furious at having been defeated, the matter will not so easily be cut short; the arm of the law will be invoked, and then I must get my head out of the noose which some fingers I know of are itching to draw tight."

"You are quite right, sir," answered the commander; "I fear that my influence at court is not strong enough to enable me to brave the matter out. Well, my success has cost me dear, but it has cured me for ever of seeking out similar adventures. My preparations will not take long, and to-morrow's dawn will find me far from Paris."

Quennebert bowed and withdrew, returning home to console his Ariadne.

CHAPTER IX

THE accusation hanging over the head of Maître Quennebert was a very serious one, threatening his life, if proved. But he was not uneasy; he knew himself in possession of facts which would enable him to refute it triumphantly.

The platonic love of Angélique de Guerchi for the handsome Chevalier de Moranges had resulted, as we have seen, in no practical wrong to the Duc de Vitry. After her reconciliation with her lover, brought about by the eminently satisfactory explanations she was able to give of her conduct, which we have already laid before our readers, she did not consider it advisable to shut her heart to his pleadings much longer, and the consequence was that at the end of a year she found herself in a condition which it was necessary to conceal from everyone. To Angélique herself, it is true, the position was not new, and she felt neither grief nor shame, regarding the coming event as a means of making her future more secure by forging a new link in the chain which bound the duke to her. But he, sure that but for himself Angélique would never have strayed from virtue's path, could not endure the thought of her losing her reputation and becoming an object for scandal to point her finger at; so that Angélique, who could not well seem less careful of her good name than he, was obliged to turn his song of woe into a duet, and consent to certain measures being taken.

One evening, therefore, shortly before Maître Quennebert's marriage, the fair lady set out, ostensibly on a journey which was to last a fortnight or three weeks. In reality she only made a circle in a post-chaise round Paris, which she re-entered at one of the barriers, where the duke awaited her with a sedan-

chair. In this she was carried to the very house to which de Jars had brought his pretended nephew after the duel. Angélique, who had to pay dearly for her errors, remained there only twenty-four hours, and then left in her coffin, which was hidden in a cellar under the palace of the Prince de Condé, the body being covered with quicklime. Two days after this dreadful death, Commander de Jars presented himself at the fatal house, and engaged a room in which he installed the chevalier.

This house, which we are about to ask the reader to enter with us, stood at the corner of the rue de la Tixeranderie and the rue des Deux-Portes. There was nothing in the exterior of it to distinguish it from any other, unless perhaps two brass plates, one of which bore the words MARIE LEROUX-CONSTANTIN, WIDOW, CERTIFICATED MIDWIFE, and the other CLAUDE PERREGAUD, SURGEON. These plates were affixed to the blank wall in the rue de la Tixeranderie, the windows of the rooms on that side looking into the courtyard. The house door, which opened directly on the first steps of a narrow winding stair, was on the other side, just beyond the low arcade under whose vaulted roof access was gained to that end of the rue des Deux-Portes. This house, though dirty, mean, and out of repair, received many wealthy visitors, whose brilliant equipages waited for them in the neighbouring streets. Often in the night great ladies crossed its threshold under assumed names and remained there for several days, during which La Constantin and Claude Perregaud, by an infamous use of their professional knowledge, restored their clients to an outward appearance of honour, and enabled them to maintain their reputation for virtue. The first and second floors contained a dozen rooms in which these abominable mysteries were practised. The large apartment which served as waiting and consultation room was oddly furnished, being crowded with objects of strange and unfamiliar form. It resembled at once the operating-room of a surgeon, the laboratory of a chemist and alchemist, and the den of a sorcerer. There, mixed up together in the greatest confusion, lay instruments of all sorts caldrons and retorts, as well as books containing

the most absurd ravings of the human mind. There were the twenty folio volumes of Albertus Magnus; the works of his disciple, Thomas de Cantopré, of Alchindus, of Averroës, of Avicenna, of Alchabitius, of David de Plaine-Campy, called L'Édelphe, surgeon to Louis XIII and author of the celebrated book *The Morbific Hydra Exterminated by the Chemical Hercules*. Beside a bronze head, such as the monk Roger Bacon possessed, which answered all the questions that were addressed to it and foretold the future by means of a magic mirror and the combination of the rules of perspective, lay an eggshell, the same which had been used by Cayet, as d'Aubigné tells us, when making men out of germs, mandrakes, and crimson silk, over a slow fire. In the presses, which had sliding-doors fastening with secret springs, stood jars filled with noxious drugs, the power of which was but too efficacious; in prominent positions, facing each other, hung two portraits, one representing Hierophilos, a Greek physician, and the other Agnodice his pupil, the first Athenian midwife.

For several years already La Constantin and Claude Perregaud had carried on their criminal practices without interference. A number of persons were of course in the secret, but their interests kept them silent, and the two accomplices had at last persuaded themselves that they were perfectly safe. One evening, however, Perregaud came home, his face distorted by terror and trembling in every limb. He had been warned while out that the suspicions of the authorities had been aroused in regard to him and La Constantin. It seemed that some little time ago, the Vicars-General had sent a deputation to the president of the chief court of justice, having heard from their priests that in one year alone six hundred women had avowed in the confessional that they had taken drugs to prevent their having children. This had been sufficient to arouse the vigilance of the police, who had set a watch on Perregaud's house, with the result that that very night a raid was to be made on it. The two criminals took hasty counsel together, but, as usual under such circumstances, arrived at no practical conclusions. It was only when the

danger was upon them that they recovered their presence of mind. In the dead of night loud knocking at the street door was heard, followed by the command to open in the name of the king.

"We can yet save ourselves!" exclaimed the surgeon, with a sudden flash of inspiration.

Rushing into the room where the pretended chevalier was lying, he called out—

"The police are coming up! If they discover your sex you are lost, and so am I. Do as I tell you."

At a sign from him, La Constantin went down and opened the door. While the rooms on the first floor were being searched, Perregaud made with a lancet a superficial incision in the chevalier's right arm, which gave very little pain, and bore a close resemblance to a sword-cut. Surgery and medicine were at that time so inextricably involved, required such apparatus, and bristled with such scientific absurdities, that no astonishment was excited by the extraordinary collection of instruments which loaded the tables and covered the floors below: even the titles of certain treatises which there had been no time to destroy, awoke no suspicion.

Fortunately for the surgeon and his accomplice, they had only one patient—the chevalier—in their house when the descent was made. When the chevalier's room was reached, the first thing which the officers of the law remarked were the hat, spurred boots, and sword of the patient. Claude Perregaud hardly looked up as the room was invaded; he only made a sign to those who came in to be quiet, and went on dressing the wound. Completely taken in, the officer in command merely asked the name of the patient and the cause of the wound. La Constantin replied that it was the young Chevalier de Moranges, nephew of Commander de Jars, who had had an affair of honour that same night, and being slightly wounded had been brought thither by his uncle hardly an hour before. These questions and the apparently trustworthy replies elicited by them being duly taken down, the uninvited visitors retired, having discovered nothing to justify their visit.

All might have been well had there been nothing the matter but the wound on the chevalier's sword-arm. But at the moment when Perregaud gave it to him the poisonous nostrums employed by La Constantin were already working in his blood. Violent fever ensued, and in three days the chevalier was dead. It was his funeral which had met Quennebert's wedding party at the church door.

Everything turned out as Quennebert had anticipated. Madame Quennebert, furious at the deceit which had been practised on her, refused to listen to her husband's justification, and Trumeau, not letting the grass grow under his feet, hastened the next day to launch an accusation of bigamy against the notary; for the paper which had been found in the nuptial chamber was nothing less than an attested copy of a contract of marriage concluded between Quennebert and Josephine-Charlotte Boullenois. It was by the merest chance that Trumeau had come on the record of the marriage, and he now challenged his rival to produce a certificate of the death of his first wife. Charlotte Boullenois, after two years of marriage, had demanded a deed of separation, which demand Quennebert had opposed. While the case was going on she had retired to the convent of La Raquette, where her intrigue with de Jars began. The commander easily induced her to let herself be carried off by force. He then concealed his conquest by causing her to adopt male attire, a mode of dress which accorded marvellously well with her peculiar tastes and rather masculine frame. At first Quennebert had instituted an active but fruitless search for his missing wife, but soon became habituated to his state of enforced single blessedness, enjoying to the full the liberty it brought with it. But his business had thereby suffered, and once having made the acquaintance of Madame Rapally, he cultivated it assiduously, knowing her fortune would be sufficient to set him straight again with the world, though he was obliged to exercise the utmost caution and reserve in his intercourse with her, as she on her side displayed none of these qualities. At last, however, matters came to such a pass that he must either go to prison

or run the risk of a second marriage. So he relu[illegible] pre[illegible]tly named a day for the ceremony, resolving to leave Paris [illegible]e str[illegible] with Madame Rapally as soon as he had settled with his credit[illegible]the [illegible]

In the short interval which ensued, and while Tru[illegible] [illegible]eau was hugging the knowledge of the discovery he had made, [illegible] stroke of luck had brought the pretended chevalier to La Constantin. As Quennebert had kept an eye on de Jars and was acquainted with all his movements, he was aware of everything that happened at Perregaud's, and as Charlotte's death preceded his second marriage by one day, he knew that no serious consequences would ensue from the legal proceedings taken against him. He produced the declarations made by Mademoiselle de Guerchi and the commander, and had the body exhumed. Extraordinary and improbable as his defence appeared at first to be, the exhumation proved the truth of his assertions. These revelations, however, drew the eye of justice again on Perregaud and his partner in crime, and this time their guilt was brought home to them. They were condemned by parliamentary decree to "be hanged by the neck till they were dead, on a gallows erected for that purpose at the cross roads of the Croix-du-Trahoir; their bodies to remain there for twenty-four hours, then to be cut down and brought back to Paris, where they were to be exposed on a gibbet," etc. etc.

It was proved that they had amassed immense fortunes in the exercise of their infamous calling. The entries in the books seized at their house, though sparse, would have led, if made public, to scandals, involving many in high places; it was therefore judged best to limit the accusation to the two deaths by blood-poisoning of Angélique de Guerchi and Charlotte Boullenois.

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

Marquis, del. *Lasfond, sculp.*

THE IRON MASK

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

FOR nearly one hundred years this curious problem has exercised the imagination of writers of fiction and of drama, and the patience of the learned in history. No subject is more obscure and elusive, and none more attractive to the general mind. It is a legend to the meaning of which none can find the key and yet in which everyone believes. Involuntarily we feel pity at the thought of that long captivity surrounded by so many extraordinary precautions, and when we dwell on the mystery which enveloped the captive, that pity is not only deepened but a kind of terror takes possession of us. It is very likely that if the name of the hero of this gloomy tale had been known at the time, he would now be forgotten. To give him a name would be to relegate him at once to the ranks of those commonplace offenders who quickly exhaust our interest and our tears. But this being, cut off from the world without leaving any discoverable trace, and whose disappearance apparently caused no void—this captive, distinguished among captives by the unexampled nature of his punishment, a prison within a prison, as if the walls of a mere cell were not narrow enough, has come to typify for us the sum of all the human misery and suffering ever inflicted by unjust tyranny.

Who was the Man in the Mask? Was he rapt away into this silent seclusion from the luxury of a court, from the intrigues of diplomacy, from the scaffold of a traitor, from the clash of battle? What did he leave behind? Love, glory, or a throne? What did he regret when hope had fled? Did he pour forth imprecations and curses on his torturers and blaspheme against high Heaven, or did he with a sigh possess his soul in patience?

The blows of fortune are differently received according to the different characters of those on whom they fall; and each one of us who in imagination threads the subterranean passages leading to the cells of Pignerol and Exilles, and incarcerates himself in the Îles Sainte-Marguerite and in the Bastille, the successive scenes of that long-protracted agony will give the prisoner a form shaped by his own fancy and a grief proportioned to his own power of suffering. How we long to pierce the thoughts and feel the heart-beats and watch the trickling tears behind that machine-like exterior, that impassible mask! Our imagination is powerfully excited by the dumbness of that fate borne by one whose words never reached the outward air, whose thoughts could never be read on the hidden features; by the isolation of forty years secured by twofold barriers of stone and iron, and she clothes the object of her contemplation in majestic splendour, connects the mystery which enveloped his existence with mighty interests, and persists in regarding the prisoner as sacrificed for the preservation of some dynastic secret involving the peace of the world and the stability of a throne.

And when we calmly reflect on the whole case, do we feel that our first impulsively adopted opinion was wrong? Do we regard our belief as a poetical illusion? I do not think so; on the contrary, it seems to me that our good sense approves our fancy's flight. For what can be more natural than the conviction that the secret of the name, age, and features of the captive, which was so perseveringly kept through long years at the cost of so much care, was of vital importance to the Government? No ordinary human passion, such as anger, hate, or vengeance, has so dogged and enduring a character; we feel that the measures taken were not the expression of a love of cruelty, for even supposing that Louis XIV were the most cruel of princes, would he not have chosen one of the thousand methods of torture ready to his hand before inventing a new and strange one? Moreover, why did he voluntarily burden himself with the obligation of surrounding a prisoner with such numberless precautions and

such sleepless vigilance? Must he not have feared that in spite of it all the walls behind which he concealed the dread mystery would one day let in the light? Was it not through his entire reign a source of unceasing anxiety? And yet he respected the life of the captive whom it was so difficult to hide, and the discovery of whose identity would have been so dangerous. It would have been so easy to bury the secret in an obscure grave, and yet the order was never given. Was this an expression of hate, anger, or any other passion? Certainly not; the conclusion we must come to in regard to the conduct of the king is that all the measures he took against the prisoner were dictated by purely political motives; that his conscience, while allowing him to do everything necessary to guard the secret, did not permit him to take the further step of putting an end to the days of an unfortunate man, who in all probability was guilty of no crime.

Courtiers are seldom obsequious to the enemies of their master, so that we may regard the respect and consideration shown to the Man in the Mask by the governor Saint-Mars, and the minister Louvois, as a testimony, not only to his high rank, but also to his innocence.

For my part, I make no pretensions to the erudition of the bookworm, and I cannot read the history of the Man in the Iron Mask without feeling my blood boil at the abominable abuse of power — the heinous crime of which he was the victim.

A few years ago, M. Fournier and I, thinking the subject suitable for representation on the stage, undertook to read, before dramatising it, all the different versions of the affair which had been published up to that time. Since our piece was successfully performed at the Odéon two other versions have appeared: one was in the form of a letter addressed to the Historical Institute by M. Billiard, who upheld the conclusions arrived at by Soulavie, on whose narrative our play was founded; the other was a work by the bibliophile Jacob, who followed a new system of inquiry, and whose book displayed the results of deep research and extensive reading. It

did not, however, cause me to change my opinion. Even had it been published before I had written my drama, I should still have adhered to the idea as to the most probable solution of the problem which I had arrived at in 1831, not only because it was incontestably the most dramatic, but also because it is supported by those moral presumptions which have such weight with us when considering a dark and doubtful question like the one before us. It will be objected, perhaps, that dramatic writers, in their love of the marvellous and the pathetic, neglect logic and strain after effect, their aim being to obtain the applause of the gallery rather than the approbation of the learned. But to this it may be replied that the learned on their part sacrifice a great deal to their love of dates, more or less exact; to their desire to elucidate some point which had hitherto been considered obscure, and which their explanations do not always clear up; to the temptation to display their proficiency in the ingenious art of manipulating facts and figures culled from a dozen musty volumes into one consistent whole.

Our interest in this strange case of imprisonment arises, not alone from its completeness and duration, but also from our uncertainty as to the motives from which it was inflicted. Where erudition alone cannot suffice; where bookworm after bookworm, disdaining the conjectures of his predecessors, comes forward with a new theory founded on some forgotten document he has hunted out, only to find himself in his turn pushed into oblivion by some follower in his track, we must turn for guidance to some other light than that of scholarship, especially if, on strict investigation, we find that not one learned solution rests on a sound basis of fact.

In the question before us, which, as we said before, is a double one, asking not only who was the Man in the Iron Mask, but why he was relentlessly subjected to this torture till the moment of his death, what we need in order to restrain our fancy is mathematical demonstration, and not philosophical induction.

While I do not go so far as to assert positively that Abbé Soulavie has once for all lifted the veil which hid the truth,

I am yet persuaded that no other system of research is superior to his, and that no other suggested solution has so many presumptions in its favour. I have not reached this firm conviction on account of the great and prolonged success of our drama, but because of the ease with which all the opinions adverse to those of the abbé may be annihilated by pitting them one against the other.

The qualities that make for success being quite different in a novel and in a drama, I could easily have founded a romance on the fictitious loves of Buckingham and the queen, or on a supposed secret marriage between her and Cardinal Mazarin, calling to my aid a work by Saint-Mihiel which the bibliophile declares he has never read, although it is assuredly neither rare nor difficult of access. I might also have merely expanded my drama, restoring to the personages therein their true names and relative positions, both of which the exigencies of the stage had sometimes obliged me to alter, and while allowing them to fill the same parts, making them act more in accordance with historical fact. No fable however far-fetched, no grouping of characters however improbable, can, however, destroy the interest which the innumerable writings about the Iron Mask excite, although no two agree in details, and although each author and each witness declares himself in possession of complete knowledge. No work, however mediocre, however worthless even, which has appeared on this subject has ever failed of success, not even, for example, the strange jumble of Chevalier de Mouhy, a kind of literary braggart, who was in the pay of Voltaire, and whose work was published anonymously in 1746 by Pierre de Hondt of The Hague. It is divided into six short parts, and bears the title, *Le Masque de Fer, ou les Aventures admirables du Père et du Fils.* An absurd romance by Regnault-Warin, and one at least equally absurd by Madame Guénard, met with a like favourable reception. In writing for the theatre, an author must choose one view of a dramatic situation to the exclusion of all others, and in following out this central idea is obliged by the inexorable laws of logic to push aside everything that

interferes with its development. A book, on the contrary, is written to be discussed; it brings under the notice of the reader all the evidence produced at a trial which has as yet not reached a definite conclusion, and which in the case before us will never reach it, unless, which is most improbable, some lucky chance should lead to some new discovery.

The first mention of the prisoner is to be found in the *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de Perse* in one 12mo volume, by an anonymous author, published by the *Compagnie des Libraires Associés d'Amsterdam* in 1745.

"Not having any other purpose," says the author (page 20, 2nd edit.), than to relate *facts which are not known, or about which no one has written, or about which it is impossible to be silent*, we refer at once to a fact which has hitherto almost escaped notice concerning Prince Giafer (Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois, son of Louis XIV and Mademoiselle de la Vallière), who was visited by Ali-Homajou (the Duc d'Orléans, the regent) in the fortress of Ispahan (the Bastille), in which he had been imprisoned for *several years*. This visit had probably no other motive than to make sure that this prince was really alive, he having been reputed dead of the plague for over thirty years, and his obsequies having been celebrated in presence of an entire army.

"Cha-Abas (Louis XIV) had a legitimate son, Séphi-Mirza (Louis, Dauphin of France), and a natural son, Giafer. These two princes, as dissimilar in character as in birth, were always rivals and always at enmity with each other. One day Giafer so far forgot himself as to strike Séphi-Mirza. Cha-Abas having heard of the insult offered to the heir to the throne, assembled his most trusted councillors, and laid the conduct of the culprit before them—conduct which, according to the law of the country, was punishable with death, an opinion in which they all agreed. One of the councillors, however, sympathising more than the others with the distress of Cha-Abas, suggested that Giafer should be sent to the army, which was then on the frontiers of Feldrun (Flanders), and that his death from plague

should be given out a few days after his arrival. Then, while the whole army was celebrating his obsequies, he should be carried off by night, in the greatest secrecy, to the stronghold on the isle of Ormus (Sainte-Marguérite), and there imprisoned for life.

"This course was adopted, and carried out by faithful and discreet agents. The prince, whose premature death was mourned by the army, being carried by unfrequented roads to the isle of Ormus, was placed in the custody of the commandant of the island, who had received orders beforehand not to allow any person whatever to see the prisoner. A single servant who was in possession of the secret was killed by the escort on the journey, and his face so disfigured by dagger thrusts that he could not be recognised.

"The commandant treated his prisoner with the most profound respect; he waited on him at meals himself, taking the dishes from the cooks at the door of the apartment, none of whom ever looked on the face of Giafer. One day it occurred to the prince to scratch his name on the back of a plate with his knife. One of the servants into whose hands the plate fell ran with it at once to the commandant, hoping he would be pleased and reward the bearer; but the unfortunate man was greatly mistaken, for he was at once made away with, that his knowledge of such an important secret might be buried with himself.

"Giafer remained several years in the castle of Ormus, and was then transported to the fortress of Ispahan; the commandant of Ormus having received the governorship of Ispahan as a reward for faithful service.

"At Ispahan, as at Ormus, whenever it was necessary on account of illness or any other cause to allow anyone to approach the prince, he was always masked; and several trustworthy persons have asserted that they had seen the masked prisoner often, and had noticed that he used the familiar '*tu*' when addressing the governor, while the latter showed his charge the greatest respect.

"As Giafer survived Cha-Abas and Séphi-Mirza by many

years, it may be asked why he was never set at liberty; but it must be remembered it would have been impossible to restore a prince to his rank and dignities whose tomb actually existed, and of whose burial there were not only living witnesses but documentary proofs, the authenticity of which it would have been useless to deny, so firm was the belief, which has lasted down to the present day, that Giafer died of the plague in camp when with the army on the frontiers of Flanders. Ali-Homajou died shortly after the visit he paid to Giafer."

This version of the story, which is the original source of all the controversy on the subject, was at first generally received as true. On a critical examination it fitted in very well with certain events which took place in the reign of Louis XIV.

The Comte de Vermandois had in fact left the court for the camp very soon after his reappearance there, for he had been banished by the king from his presence some time before for having, in company with several young nobles, indulged in the most reprehensible excesses.

"The king," says Mademoiselle de Montpensier (*Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, vol. xliii. p. 474, of *Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France*, Second Series, published by Petitot), "had not been satisfied with his conduct and refused to see him. The young prince had caused his mother much sorrow, but had been so well lectured that it was believed that he had at last turned over a new leaf." He only remained four days at court, reached the camp before Courtrai early in November 1683, was taken ill on the evening of the 12th, and died on the 19th of the same month of a malignant fever. Mademoiselle de Montpensier says that the Comte de Vermandois "fell ill from drink."

There are, of course, objections of all kinds to this theory.

For if, during the four days the comte was at court, he had struck the dauphin, everyone would have heard of the monstrous crime, and yet it is nowhere spoken of, except in the *Mémoires de Perse*. What renders the story of the blow still more improbable is the difference in age between the two

princes. The dauphin, who already had a son, the Duc de Bourgogne, more than a year old, was born the 1st November 1661, and was therefore six years older than the Comte de Vermandois. But the most complete answer to the tale is to be found in a letter written by Barbézieux to Saint-Mars, dated the 13th August 1691:—

"When you have any information to send me relative to the prisoner who has been in your charge for twenty years, I most earnestly enjoin on you to take the same precautions as when you write to M. de Louvois."

The Comte de Vermandois, the official registration of whose death bears the date 1685, cannot have been twenty years a prisoner in 1691.

Six years after the Man in the Mask had been thus delivered over to the curiosity of the public, the *Siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols. octavo, Berlin, 1751) was published by Voltaire under the pseudonym of M. de Francheville. Everyone turned to this work, which had been long expected, for details relating to the mysterious prisoner about whom everyone was talking.

Voltaire ventured at length to speak more openly of the prisoner than anyone had hitherto done, and to treat as a matter of history "an event long ignored by all historians" (vol. ii. p. 11, 1st edition, chap. xxv.). He assigned an approximate date to the beginning of this captivity, "some months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin" (1661); he gave a description of the prisoner, who according to him was "young and dark-complexioned; his figure was above the middle height and well proportioned; his features were exceedingly handsome, and his bearing was noble. When he spoke his voice inspired interest; he never complained of his lot, and gave no hint as to his rank." Nor was the mask forgotten: "The part which covered the chin was furnished with steel springs, which allowed the prisoner to eat without uncovering his face." And, lastly, he fixed the date of the death of the nameless captive, who "was buried," he says, "in 1704, by night, in the parish church of Saint-Paul."

Voltaire's narrative coincided with the account given in the *Mémoires de Perse*, save for the omission of the incident which, according to the *Mémoires*, led in the first instance to the imprisonment of Giafer. "The prisoner," says Voltaire, "was sent to the Îles Sainte-Marguerite, and afterwards to the Bastille, in charge of a trusty official; he wore his mask on the journey, and his escort had orders to shoot him if he took it off. The Marquis de Louvois visited him while he was on the islands, and when speaking to him stood all the time in a respectful attitude. The prisoner was removed to the Bastille in 1690, where he was lodged as comfortably as could be managed in that building; he was supplied with everything he asked for, especially with the finest linen and the costliest lace, in both of which his taste was perfect; he had a guitar to play on, his table was excellent, and the governor rarely sat in his presence."

Voltaire added a few further details which had been given him by M. de Bernaville, the successor of M. de Saint-Mars, and by an old physician of the Bastille who had attended the prisoner whenever his health required a doctor, but who had never seen his face, although he had "often seen his tongue and his body." He also asserted that M. de Chamillart was the last minister who was in the secret, and that when his son-in-law, Marshal de la Feuillade, besought him on his knees, de Chamillart being on his deathbed, to tell him the name of the Man in the Iron Mask, the minister replied that he was under a solemn oath never to reveal the secret, it being an affair of state. To all these details, which the marshal acknowledges to be correct, Voltaire adds a remarkable note: "What increases our wonder is, that when the unknown captive was sent to the Îles Sainte-Marguerite no personage of note disappeared from the European stage."

The story of the Comte de Vermandois and the blow was treated as an absurd and romantic invention, which does not evena ttempt to keep within the bounds of the possible, by Baron C. (according to P. Marchand, Baron Crunyngen) in a letter inserted in the *Bibliothèque raisonnée des Ouvrages des*

Savants de l'Europe, June 1745. The discussion was revived somewhat later, however, and a few Dutch scholars were supposed to be responsible for a new theory founded on history; the foundations proving somewhat shaky, however,—a quality which it shares, we must say, with all the other theories which have ever been advanced.

According to this new theory, the masked prisoner was a young foreign nobleman, groom of the chambers to Anne of Austria, and the real father of Louis XIV. This anecdote appears first in a duodecimo volume printed by Pierre Marteau at Cologne in 1692, and which bears the title, *The Loves of Anne of Austria, Consort of Louis XIII, with M. le C. D. R., the Real Father of Louis XIV, King of France; being a Minute Account of the Measures taken to give an Heir to the Throne of France, the Influences at Work to bring this to pass, and the Dénoûment of the Comedy.*

This libel ran through five editions, bearing date successively, 1692, 1693, 1696, 1722, and 1738. In the title of the edition of 1696 the words "Cardinal de Richelieu" are inserted in place of the initials "C. D. R.," but that this is only a printer's error everyone who reads the work will perceive. Some have thought the three letters stood for Comte de Rivière, others for Comte de Rochefort, whose *Mémoires* compiled by Sandras de Courtilz supply these initials. The author of the book was an Orange writer in the pay of William III, and its object was, he says, "to unveil the great mystery of iniquity which hid the true origin of Louis XIV." He goes on to remark that "the knowledge of this fraud, although comparatively rare outside France, was widely spread within her borders. The well-known coldness of Louis XIII, the extraordinary birth of Louis-Dieu-donné, so called because he was born in the twenty-third year of a childless marriage, and several other remarkable circumstances connected with the birth, all point clearly to a father other than the prince, who with great effrontery is passed off by his adherents as such. The famous barricades of Paris, and the organised revolt led by distinguished men against Louis XIV on his accession to the throne, proclaimed aloud the king's

illegitimacy, so that it rang through the country; and as the accusation had reason on its side, hardly anyone doubted its truth."

We give below a short abstract of the narrative, the plot of which is rather skilfully constructed:—

"Cardinal Richelieu, looking with satisfied pride at the love of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, brother of the king, for his niece Parisiatis (Madame de Combalet), formed the plan of uniting the young couple in marriage. Gaston taking the suggestion as an insult, struck the cardinal. Père Joseph then tried to gain the cardinal's consent and that of his niece to an attempt to deprive Gaston of the throne, which the childless marriage of Louis XIII seemed to assure him. A young man, the C. D. R. of the book, was introduced into Anne of Austria's room, who though a wife in name had long been a widow in reality. She defended herself but feebly, and on seeing the cardinal next day said to him, 'Well, you have had your wicked will; but take good care, sir cardinal, that I may find above the mercy and goodness which you have tried by many pious sophistries to convince me is awaiting me. Watch over my soul, I charge you, for I have yielded!' The queen having given herself up to love for some time, the joyful news that she would soon become a mother began to spread over the kingdom. In this manner was born Louis XIV, the putative son of Louis XIII. If this instalment of the tale be favourably received, says the pamphleteer, the sequel will soon follow, in which the sad fate of C. D. R. will be related, who was made to pay dearly for his short-lived pleasure."

Although the first part was a great success, the promised sequel never appeared. It must be admitted that such a story, though it never convinced a single person of the illegitimacy of Louis XIV, was an excellent prologue to the tale of the unfortunate lot of the Man in the Iron Mask, and increased the interest and curiosity with which that singular historical mystery was regarded. But the views of the Dutch scholars thus set forth met with little credence, and were soon forgotten in a new solution.

The third historian to write about the prisoner of the Îles Sainte-Marguerite was Lagrange-Chancel. He was just twenty-nine years of age when, excited by Fréron's hatred of Voltaire, he addressed a letter from his country place, Antoniat, in Perigord, to the *Année Littéraire* (vol. iii. p. 188), demolishing the theory advanced in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, and giving facts which he had collected whilst himself imprisoned in the same place as the unknown prisoner twenty years later.

"My detention in the Îles-Sainte-Marguerite," says Lagrange-Chancel, "brought many things to my knowledge which a more painstaking historian than M. de Voltaire would have taken the trouble to find out; for at the time when I was taken to the islands the imprisonment of the Man in the Iron Mask was no longer regarded as a state secret. This extraordinary event, which M. de Voltaire places in 1662, a few months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, did not take place till 1669, eight years after the death of His Eminence. M. de La Motte-Guérin, commandant of the islands in my time, assured me that the prisoner was the Duc de Beaufort, who was reported killed at the siege of Candia, but whose body had never been recovered, as all the narratives of that event agree in stating. He also told me that M. de Saint-Mars, who succeeded Pignerol as governor of the islands, showed great consideration for the prisoner, that he waited on him at table, that the service was of silver, and that the clothes supplied to the prisoner were as costly as he desired; that when he was ill and in need of a physician or surgeon, he was obliged under pain of death to wear his mask in their presence, but that when he was alone he was permitted to pull out the hairs of his beard with steel tweezers, which were kept bright and polished. I saw a pair of these which had been actually used for this purpose in the possession of M. de Formanoir, nephew of Saint-Mars, and lieutenant of a Free Company raised for the purpose of guarding the prisoners. Several persons told me that when Saint-Mars, who had been placed over the Bastille, conducted his charge thither, the latter was heard to say behind his iron

mask, 'Has the king designs on my life?' To which Saint-Mars replied, 'No, my prince; your life is safe: you must only let yourself be guided.'

"I also learned from a man called Dubuisson, cashier to the well-known Samuel Bernard, who, having been imprisoned for some years in the Bastille, was removed to the Îles Sainte-Marguerite, where he was confined along with some others in a room exactly over the one occupied by the unknown prisoner. He told me that they were able to communicate with him by means of the flue of the chimney, but on asking him why he persisted in not revealing his name and the cause of his imprisonment, he replied that such an avowal would be fatal not only to him but to those to whom he made it.

"Whether it were so or not, to-day the name and rank of this political victim are secrets the preservation of which is no longer necessary to the State, and I have thought that to tell the public what I know would cut short the long chain of circumstances which everyone was forging according to his fancy, instigated thereto by an author whose gift of relating the most impossible events in such a manner as to make them seem true has won for all his writings such success—even for his *Vie de Charles XII.*"

This theory, according to Jacob, is more probable than any of the others.

"Beginning with the year 1664," he says, "the Duc de Beaufort had by his insubordination and levity endangered the success of several maritime expeditions. In October 1666 Louis XIV remonstrated with him with much tact, begging him to try to make himself more and more capable in the service of his king by cultivating the talents with which he was endowed, and ridding himself of the faults which spoilt his conduct. 'I do not doubt,' he concludes, 'that you will be all the more grateful to me for this mark of my benevolence towards you, when you reflect how few kings have ever shown their goodwill in a similar manner'" (*Œuvres de Louis XIV*, vol. v. p. 388). Several calamities in the royal navy are known to have been

brought about by the Duc de Beaufort. M. Eugène Sue, in his *Histoire de la Marine*, which is full of new and curious information, has drawn a very good picture of the position of the "*roi des halles*," the "king of the markets," in regard to Colbert and Louis XIV. Colbert wished to direct all the manœuvres of the fleet from his study, while it was commanded by the naval grandmaster in the capricious manner which might be expected from his factious character and love of bluster (Eugène Sue, vol i., *Pièces Justificatives*). In 1699 Louis XIV sent the Duc de Beaufort to the relief of Candia, which the Turks were besieging. Seven hours after his arrival Beaufort was killed in a sortie. The Duc de Navailles, who shared with him the command of the French squadron, simply reported his death as follows: "He met a body of Turks who were pressing our troops hard: placing himself at the head of the latter, he fought valiantly, but at length his soldiers abandoned him, *and we have not been able to learn his fate*" (*Mémoires du Duc de Navailles*, book iv. p. 243).

The report of his death spread rapidly through France and Italy; magnificent funeral services were held in Paris, Rome, and Venice, and funeral orations delivered. Nevertheless, many believed that he would one day reappear, as his body had never been recovered.

Guy Patin mentions this belief, which he did not share, in two of his letters:—

"Several wagers have been laid that M. de Beaufort is not dead! *O utinam!*" (Guy Patin, September 26, 1669).

"It is said that M. de Vivonne has been granted by commission the post of vice-admiral of France for twenty years; but there are many who believe that the Duc de Beaufort is not dead, but imprisoned in some Turkish island. Believe this who may, *I* don't; he is really dead, and the last thing I should desire would be to be as dead as he" (*Ibid.*, January 14, 1670).

The following are the objections to this theory:—

"In several narratives written by eye-witnesses of the siege

of Candia," says Jacob, "it is related that the Turks, according to their custom, despoiled the body and cut off the head of the Duc de Beaufort on the field of battle, and that the latter was afterwards exhibited at Constantinople; and this may account for some of the details given by Sandras de Courtilz in his *Mémoires du Marquis de Montbrun* and his *Mémoires d'Artagnan*, for one can easily imagine that the naked, headless body might escape recognition. M. Eugène Sue, in his *Histoire de la Marine* (vol. ii. chap. 6), had adopted this view, which coincides with the accounts left by Philibert de Jarry and the Marquis de Ville, the MSS. of whose letters and *Mémoires* are to be found in the Bibliothèque du Roi.

"In the first volume of the *Histoire de la Détention des Philosophes et des Gens de Lettres à la Bastille, etc.*, we find the following passage:—

"'Without dwelling on the difficulty and danger of an abduction, which an Ottoman scimitar might any day during this memorable siege render unnecessary, we shall restrict ourselves to declaring positively that the correspondence of Saint-Mars from 1669 to 1680 gives us no ground for supposing that the governor of Pignerol had any great prisoner of state in his charge during that period of time, excepting Fouquet and Lauzun.'"

While we profess no blind faith in the conclusions arrived at by the learned critic, we would yet add to the considerations on which he relies another, viz. that it is most improbable that Louis XIV should ever have considered it necessary to take such rigorous measures against the Duc de Beaufort. Truculent and self-confident as he was, he never acted against the royal authority in such a manner as to oblige the king to strike him down in secret; and it is difficult to believe that Louis XIV, peaceably seated on his throne, with all the enemies of his minority under his feet, should have revenged himself on the duke as an old Frondeur.

The critic calls our attention to another fact also adverse to the theory under consideration. The Man in the Iron Mask

loved fine linen and rich lace, he was reserved in character and possessed of extreme refinement, and none of this suits the portraits of the *roi des halles* which contemporary historians have drawn.

Regarding the anagram of the name Marchiali (the name under which the death of the prisoner was registered), *hic amiral*, as a proof, we cannot think that the gaolers of Pignerol amused themselves in propounding conundrums to exercise the keen intellects of their contemporaries; and moreover the same anagram would apply equally well to the Count of Vermandois, who was made admiral when only twenty-two months old.

Abbé Papon, in his roamings through Provence, paid a visit to the prison in which the Iron Mask was confined, and thus speaks:—

"It was to the Îles Sainte-Marguerite that the famous prisoner with the iron mask whose name has never been discovered, was transported at the end of the last century; very few of those attached to his service were allowed to speak to him. One day, as M. de Saint-Mars was conversing with him, standing outside his door, in a kind of corridor, so as to be able to see from a distance everyone who approached, the son of one of the governor's friends, hearing the voices, came up; Saint-Mars quickly closed the door of the room, and, rushing to meet the young man, asked him with an air of great anxiety if he had overheard anything that was said. Having convinced himself that he had heard nothing, the governor sent the young man away the same day, and wrote to the father that the adventure was like to have cost the son dear, and that he had sent him back to his home to prevent any further imprudence.

"I was curious enough to visit the room in which the unfortunate man was imprisoned, on the 2nd of February 1778. It is lighted by one window to the north, overlooking the sea, about fifteen feet above the terrace where the sentries paced to and fro. This window was pierced through a very thick wall and the embrasure barricaded by three iron bars, thus

separating the prisoner from the sentries by a distance of over two fathoms. I found an officer of the Free Company in the fortress who was nigh on fourscore years old; he told me that his father, who had belonged to the same Company, had often related to him how a friar had seen something white floating on the water under the prisoner's window. On being fished out and carried to M. de Saint-Mars, it proved to be a shirt of very fine material, loosely folded together, and covered with writing from end to end. M. de Saint-Mars spread it out and read a few words, then turning to the friar who had brought it he asked him in an embarrassed manner if he had been led by curiosity to read any of the writing. The friar protested repeatedly that he had not read a line, but nevertheless he was found dead in bed two days later. This incident was told so often to my informant by his father and by the chaplain of the fort of that time that he regarded it as incontestably true. The following fact also appears to me to be equally well established by the testimony of many witnesses. I collected all the evidence I could on the spot, and also in the Lerins monastery, where the tradition is preserved.

"A female attendant being wanted for the prisoner, a woman of the village of Mongin offered herself for the place, being under the impression that she would thus be able to make her children's fortune; but on being told that she would not only never be allowed to see her children again, but would be cut off from the rest of the world as well, she refused to be shut up with a prisoner whom it cost so much to serve. I may mention here that at the two outer angles of the wall of the fort which faced the sea two sentries were placed, with orders to fire on any boat which approached within a certain distance.

"The prisoner's personal attendant died in the Îles Sainte-Marguerite. The brother of the officer whom I mentioned above was partly in the confidence of M. de Saint-Mars, and he often told how he was summoned to the prison once at midnight and ordered to remove a corpse, and that he carried it on his shoulders to the burial-place, feeling certain it was the prisoner who was dead; but it was only his servant, and it

was then that an effort was made to supply his place by a female attendant."

Abbé Papon gives some curious details, hitherto unknown to the public, but as he mentions no names his narrative cannot be considered as evidence. Voltaire never replied to Lagrange-Chancel, who died the same year in which his letter was published. Fréron desiring to revenge himself for the scathing portrait which Voltaire had drawn of him in the *Écossaise*, called to his assistance a more redoubtable adversary than Lagrange-Chancel. Sainte-Foix had brought to the front a brand new theory, founded on a passage by Hume in an article in the *Année Littéraire* (1768, vol. iv.), in which he maintained that the Man in the Iron Mask was the Duke of Monmouth, a natural son of Charles II, who was found guilty of high treason and beheaded in London on the 15th July 1685.

This is what the English historian says:—

"It was commonly reported in London that the Duke of Monmouth's life had been saved, one of his adherents who bore a striking resemblance to the duke having consented to die in his stead, while the real culprit was secretly carried off to France, there to undergo a lifelong imprisonment."

The great affection which the English felt for the Duke of Monmouth, and his own conviction that the people only needed a leader to induce them to shake off the yoke of James II, led him to undertake an enterprise which might possibly have succeeded had it been carried out with prudence. He landed at Lyme, in Dorset, with only one hundred and twenty men; six thousand soon gathered round his standard; a few towns declared in his favour; he caused himself to be proclaimed king, affirming that he was born in wedlock, and that he possessed the proofs of the secret marriage of Charles II and Lucy Walters, his mother. He met the Royalists on the battlefield, and victory seemed to be on his side, when just at the decisive moment his ammunition ran short. Lord Gray, who commanded the cavalry, beat a cowardly retreat, the

unfortunate Monmouth was taken prisoner, brought to London, and beheaded.

The details published in the *Siècle de Louis XIV* as to the personal appearance of the masked prisoner might have been taken as a description of Monmouth, who possessed great physical beauty. Sainte-Foix had collected every scrap of evidence in favour of his solution of the mystery, making use even of the following passage from an anonymous romance called *The Loves of Charles II and James II, Kings of England*:—

"The night of the pretended execution of the Duke of Monmouth, the king, attended by three men, came to the Tower and summoned the duke to his presence. A kind of loose cowl was thrown over his head, and he was put into a carriage, into which the king and his attendants also got, and was driven away."

Sainte-Foix also referred to the alleged visit of Saunders, confessor to James II, paid to the Duchess of Portsmouth after the death of that monarch, when the duchess took occasion to say that she could never forgive King James for consenting to Monmouth's execution, in spite of the oath he had taken on the sacred elements at the deathbed of Charles II that he would never take his natural brother's life, even in case of rebellion. To this the priest replied quickly, "The king kept his oath."

Hume also records this solemn oath, but we cannot say that all the historians agree on this point. *The Universal History* by Guthrie and Gray, and the *Histoire d'Angleterre* by Rapin, Thoyras, and de Barrow, do not mention it.

"Further," wrote Sainte-Foix, "an English surgeon called Nelaton, who frequented the Café Procope, much affected by men of letters, often related that during the time he was senior apprentice to a surgeon who lived near the Porte Saint-Antoine, he was once taken to the Bastille to bleed a prisoner. He was conducted to this prisoner's room by the governor himself, and found the patient suffering from violent headache. He spoke with an English accent, wore a gold-flowered dressing-

gown of black and orange, and had his face covered by a napkin knotted behind his head."

This story does not hold water: it would be difficult to form a mask out of a napkin; the Bastille had a resident surgeon of its own as well as a physician and apothecary; no one could gain access to a prisoner without a written order from a minister, even the Viaticum could only be introduced by the express permission of the lieutenant of police.

This theory met at first with no objections, and seemed to be going to oust all the others, thanks, perhaps, to the combative and restive character of its promulgator, who bore criticism badly, and whom no one cared to incense, his sword being even more redoubtable than his pen.

It was known that when Saint-Mars journeyed with his prisoner to the Bastille, they had put up on the way at Palteau, in Champagne, a property belonging to the governor. Fréron therefore addressed himself to a grand-nephew of Saint-Mars, who had inherited this estate, asking if he could give him any information about this visit. The following reply appeared in the *Année Littéraire* (June 1768):—

"As it appears from the letter of M. de Sainte-Foix from which you quote that the Man in the Iron Mask still exercises the fancy of your journalists, I am willing to tell you all I know about the prisoner. He was known in the islands of Sainte-Marguerite and at the Bastille as 'La Tour.' The governor and all the other officials showed him great respect, and supplied him with everything he asked for that could be granted to a prisoner. He often took exercise in the yard of the prison, but never without his mask on. It was not till the *Siècle* of M. de Voltaire appeared that I learned that the mask was of iron and furnished with springs; it may be that the circumstance was overlooked, but he never wore it except when taking the air, or when he had to appear before a stranger.

"M. de Blainvilliers, an infantry officer who was acquainted with M. de Saint-Mars both at Pignerol and Sainte-Marguerite, has often told me that the lot of 'La Tour' greatly excited his

curiosity, and that he had once borrowed the clothes and arms of a soldier whose turn it was to be sentry on the terrace under the prisoner's window at Sainte-Marguerite, and undertaken the duty himself; that he had seen the prisoner distinctly, without his mask; that his face was white, that he was tall and well proportioned, except that his ankles were too thick, and that his hair was white, although he appeared to be still in the prime of life. He passed the whole of the night in question pacing to and fro in his room. Blainvilliers added that he was always dressed in brown, that he had plenty of fine linen and books, that the governor and the other officers always stood uncovered in his presence till he gave them leave to cover and sit down, and that they often bore him company at table.

"In 1698 M. de Saint-Mars was promoted from the governorship of the Îles Sainte-Marguerite to that of the Bastille. In moving thither, accompanied by his prisoner, he made his estate of Palteau a halting-place. The masked man arrived in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint-Mars, and several mounted men rode beside it. The peasants were assembled to greet their liege lord. M. de Saint-Mars dined with his prisoner, who sat with his back to the dining-room windows, which looked out on the court. None of the peasants whom I have questioned were able to see whether the man kept his mask on while eating, but they all noticed that M. de Saint-Mars, who sat opposite to his charge, laid two pistols beside his plate; that only one footman waited at table, who went into the antechamber to change the plates and dishes, always carefully closing the dining-room door behind him. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard his face was covered with a black mask, but the peasants could see his lips and teeth, and remarked that he was tall, and had white hair. M. de Saint-Mars slept in a bed placed beside the prisoner's. M. de Blainvilliers told me also that 'as soon as he was dead, which happened in 1704, he was buried at Saint-Paul's,' and that 'the coffin was filled with substances which would rapidly consume the body.' He added, 'I never heard that the masked man spoke with an English accent.'"

Sainte-Foix proved the story related by M. de Blainvilliers to be little worthy of belief, showing by a circumstance mentioned in the letter that the imprisoned man could not be the Duc de Beaufort; witness the epigram of Madame de Choisy, "M. de Beaufort longs to bite and can't," whereas the peasants had seen the prisoner's teeth through his mask. It appeared as if the theory of Sainte-Foix were going to stand, when a Jesuit father, named Griffet, who was confessor at the Bastille, devoted chapter xiii. of his *Traité des différentes Sortes de Preuves qui servent à établir la Verité dans l'Histoire* (12mo, Liège, 1769) to the consideration of the Iron Mask. He was the first to quote an authentic document which certifies that the Man in the Iron Mask about whom there was so much disputing really existed. This was the written journal of M. du Jonca, King's Lieutenant in the Bastille in 1698, from which Père Griffet took the following passage:—

"On Thursday, September the 8th, 1698, at three o'clock in the afternoon, M. de Saint-Mars, the new governor of the Bastille, entered upon his duties. He arrived from the islands of Sainte-Marguerite, bringing with him in a litter a prisoner whose name is a secret, and whom he had had under his charge there, and at Pignerol. This prisoner, who was always masked, was at first placed in the Bassinière tower, where he remained until the evening. At nine o'clock p.m. I took him to the third room of the Bertaudière tower, which I had had already furnished before his arrival with all needful articles, having received orders to do so from M. de Saint-Mars. While I was showing him the way to his room, I was accompanied by M. Rosarges, who had also arrived along with M. de Saint-Mars, and whose office it was to wait on the said prisoner, whose table is to be supplied by the governor."

Du Jonca's diary records the death of the prisoner in the following terms:—

"Monday, 19th November 1703. The unknown prisoner, who always wore a black velvet mask, and whom M. de Saint-

Mars brought with him from the Îles Sainte-Marguerite, and whom he had so long in charge, felt slightly unwell yesterday on coming back from mass. He died to-day at 10 p.m. without having a serious illness, indeed it could not have been slighter. M. Guiraut, our chaplain, confessed him yesterday, but as his death was quite unexpected he did not receive the last sacraments, although the chaplain was able to exhort him up to the moment of his death. He was buried on Tuesday the 20th November at 4 p.m. in the burial-ground of St. Paul's, our parish church. The funeral expenses amounted to 40 livres."

His name and age were withheld from the priests of the parish. The entry made in the parish register, which Père Griffet also gives, is in the following words:—

"On the 19th November 1703, Marchiali, aged about forty-five, died in the Bastille, whose body was buried in the graveyard of Saint-Paul's, his parish, on the 20th instant, in the presence of M. Rosarges and of M. Reilh, Surgeon-Major of the Bastille.

"(*Signed*) ROSARGES.
"REILH."

As soon as he was dead everything belonging to him, without exception, was burned; such as his linen, clothes, bed and bedding, rugs, chairs, and even the doors of the room he occupied. His service of plate was melted down, the walls of his room were scoured and whitewashed, the very floor was renewed, from fear of his having hidden a note under it, or left some mark by which he could be recognised.

Père Griffet did not agree with the opinions of either Lagrange-Chancel or Sainte-Foix, but seemed to incline towards the theory set forth in the *Mémoires de Perse*, against which no irrefutable objections had been advanced. He concluded by saying that before arriving at any decision as to who the prisoner really was, it would be necessary to ascertain the exact date of his arrival at Pignerol.

Sainte-Foix hastened to reply, upholding the soundness of

the views he had advanced. He procured from Arras a copy of an entry in the registers of the Cathedral Chapter, stating that Louis XIV had written with his own hand to the said Chapter that they were to admit to burial the body of the Comte de Vermandois, who had died in the city of Courtrai; that he desired that the deceased should be interred in the centre of the choir, in the vault in which lay the remains of Elisabeth, Comtesse de Vermandois, wife of Philip of Alsace, Comte de Flanders, who had died in 1182. It is not to be supposed that Louis XIV would have chosen a family vault in which to bury a log of wood.

Sainte-Foix was, however, not acquainted with the letter of Barbézieux, dated the 13th August 1691, to which we have already referred, as a proof that the prisoner was not the Comte de Vermandois; it is equally a proof that he was not the Duke of Monmouth, as Sainte-Foix maintained; for sentence was passed on the Duke of Monmouth in 1685, so that it could not be of him either that Barbézieux wrote in 1691, "The prisoner whom you have had in charge for *twenty years*."

In the very year in which Sainte-Foix began to flatter himself that his theory was successfully established, Baron Heiss brought a new one forward, in a letter dated "Phalsburg, 28th June 1770," and addressed to the *Journal Encyclopédique*. It was accompanied by a letter translated from the Italian which appeared in the *Histoire Abrégée de l'Europe* by Jacques Bernard, published by Claude Jordan, Leyden, 1685–87, in detached sheets. This letter stated (August 1687, article *Mantoue*) that the Duke of Mantua being desirous to sell his capital, Casale, to the King of France, had been dissuaded therefrom by his secretary, and induced to join the other princes of Italy in their endeavours to thwart the ambitious schemes of Louis XIV. The Marquis d'Arcy, French ambassador to the court of Savoy, having been informed of the secretary's influence, distinguished him by all kinds of civilities, asked him frequently to table, and at last invited him to join a large hunting party two or three leagues outside Turin. They set out together, but at a short distance from the city were surrounded by a dozen horsemen,

who carried off the secretary, *disguised him, put a mask on him, and took him to Pignerol.* He was not kept long in this fortress, as it was *too near the Italian frontier, and although he was carefully guarded it was feared that the walls would speak;* so he was transferred to the Îles Sainte-Marguerite, *where he is at present in the custody of M. de Saint-Mars.*

This theory, of which much was heard later, did not at first excite much attention. What is certain is that the Duke of Mantua's secretary, by name Matthioli, was arrested in 1679 through the agency of Abbé d'Estrade and M. de Catinat, and taken with the utmost secrecy to Pignerol, where he was imprisoned and placed in charge of M. de Saint-Mars. He must not, however, be confounded with the Man in the Iron Mask.

Catinat says of Matthioli in a letter to Louvois: "No one knows the name of this *knave.*"

Louvois writes to Saint-Mars: "I admire your patience in waiting for an order to treat such a rogue as he deserves, when he treats you with disrespect."

Saint-Mars replies to the minister: "I have charged Blainvilliers to show him a cudgel and tell him that with its aid we can make the froward meek."

Again Louvois writes: "The clothes *of such people* must be made to last three or four years."

This cannot have been the nameless prisoner who was treated with such consideration, before whom Louvois stood bareheaded, who was supplied with fine linen and lace, and so on.

Altogether, we gather from the correspondence of Saint-Mars that the unhappy man alluded to above was confined along with a mad Jacobin, and at last became mad himself, and succumbed to his misery in 1686.

Voltaire, who was probably the first to supply such inexhaustible food for controversy, kept silence and took no part in the discussions. But when all the theories had been presented to the public, he set about refuting them. He made himself very merry, in the seventh edition of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie distibuées en forme de Dictionnaire* (Geneva, 1791), over the

complaisance attributed to Louis XIV in acting as police-sergeant and gaoler for James II, William III, and Anne, with all of whom he was at war. Persisting still in taking 1661 or 1662 as the date when the incarceration of the masked prisoner began, he attacks the opinions advanced by Lagrange-Chancel and Père Griffet, which they had drawn from the anonymous *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de Perse.* "Having thus dissipated all these illusions," he says, "let us now consider who the *masked* prisoner was, and how old he was when he died. It is evident that if he was never allowed to walk in the courtyard of the Bastille or to see a physician *without his mask*, it must have been lest his *too striking* resemblance to someone should be remarked; he could show his tongue but not his face. As regards his age, he himself told the apothecary at the Bastille, a few days before his death, that he thought he was about sixty; this I have often heard from a son-in-law to this apothecary, M. Marsoban, surgeon to Marshal Richelieu, and afterwards to the regent, the Duc d'Orléans. The writer of this article knows perhaps more on this subject than Père Griffet. But he has said his say."

This article in the *Questions on the Encyclopædia* was followed by some remarks from the pen of the publisher, which are also, however, attributed by the publishers of Kelh to Voltaire himself. The publisher, who sometimes calls himself the author, puts aside without refutation all the theories advanced, including that of Baron Heiss, and says he has come to the conclusion that the Iron Mask was, without doubt, a brother and an elder brother of Louis XIV, by a lover of the queen. Anne of Austria had come to persuade herself that hers alone was the fault which had deprived Louis XIV of an heir, but the birth of the Iron Mask undeceived her. The cardinal, to whom she confided her secret, cleverly arranged to bring the king and queen, who had long lived apart, together again. A second son was the result of this reconciliation; and the first child being removed in secret, Louis XIV remained in ignorance of the existence of his half-brother till after his majority. It was the policy of Louis XIV to affect a great respect for the royal

house, so he avoided much embarrassment to himself and a scandal affecting the memory of Anne of Austria by adopting the *wise and just* measure of burying alive the pledge of an adulterous love. He was thus enabled to avoid committing an act of cruelty, which *a sovereign less conscientious and less magnanimous* would have considered *a necessity*.

After this declaration Voltaire made no further reference to the Iron Mask. This last version of the story upset that of Sainte-Foix. Voltaire having been initiated into the state secret by the Marquis de Richelieu, we may be permitted to suspect that being naturally indiscreet he published the truth from behind the shelter of a pseudonym, or at least gave a version which approached the truth, but later on, realising the dangerous significance of his words, he preserved for the future complete silence.

We now approach the question whether the prince who thus became the Iron Mask was an illegitimate brother or a twin-brother of Louis XIV. The first was maintained by M. Quentin-Crawfurd; the second by Abbé Soulavie in his *Mémoires du Maréchal Duc de Richelieu* (London, 1790). In 1783 the Marquis de Luchet, in the *Journal des Gens du Monde* (vol. iv. No. 23, p. 282, *et seq.*), awarded to Buckingham the honour of the paternity in dispute. In support of this, he quoted the testimony of a lady of the house of Saint-Quentin who had been a mistress of the minister Barbézieux, and who died at Chartres about the middle of the eighteenth century. She had declared publicly that Louis XIV had consigned his elder brother to perpetual imprisonment, and that the mask was necessitated by the close resemblance of the two brothers to each other.

The Duke of Buckingham, who came to France in 1625, in order to escort Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII, to England, where she was to marry the Prince of Wales, made no secret of his ardent love for the queen, and it is almost certain that she was not insensible to his passion. An anonymous pamphlet, *La Conférence du Cardinal Mazarin avec le Gazetier* (Brussels, 1649), says that she was infatuated about him, and

allowed him to visit her in her room. She even permitted him to take off and keep one of her gloves, and his vanity leading him to show his spoil, the king heard of it, and was vastly offended. An anecdote, the truth of which no one has ever denied, relates that one day Buckingham spoke to the queen with such passion in the presence of her lady-in-waiting, the Marquise de Senecey, that the latter exclaimed, "Be silent, sir, you cannot speak thus to the Queen of France!" According to this version, the Man in the Iron Mask must have been born at latest in 1637, but the mention of any such date would destroy the possibility of Buckingham's paternity, for he was assassinated at Portsmouth on September 2nd, 1628.

After the taking of the Bastille the masked prisoner became the fashionable topic of discussion, and one heard of nothing else. On the 13th of August 1789 it was announced in an article in a journal called *Loisirs d'un Patriote français*, which was afterwards published anonymously as a pamphlet, that the publisher had seen, among other documents found in the Bastille, a card bearing the unintelligible number "64389000," and the following note: "Fouquet, arriving from Les Îles Sainte-Marguerite in an iron mask." To this there was, it was said, a double signature, viz. "XXX," superimposed on the name "Kersadion." The journalist was of opinion that Fouquet had succeeded in making his escape, but had been retaken and condemned to pass for dead, and to wear a mask henceforward, as a punishment for his attempted evasion. This tale made some impression, for it was remembered that in the Supplement to the *Siècle de Louis XIV* it was stated that Chamillart had said that "the Iron Mask was a man who knew all the secrets of M. Fouquet." But the existence of this card was never proved, and we cannot accept the story on the unsupported word of an anonymous writer.

From the time that restrictions on the press were removed, hardly a day passed without the appearance of some new pamphlet on the Iron Mask. Louis Dutens, in *Correspondence interceptée* (12mo, 1789), revived the theory of Baron Heiss,

supporting it by new and curious facts. He proved that Louis XIV had really ordered one of the Duke of Mantua's ministers to be carried off and imprisoned in Pignerol. Dutens gave the name of the victim as Girolamo Magni. He also quoted from a memorandum which by the wish of the Marquis de Castellane was drawn up by a certain Souchon, probably the man whom Papon questioned in 1778. This Souchon was the son of a man who had belonged to the Free Company maintained in the islands in the time of Saint-Mars, and was seventy-nine years old. This memorandum gives a detailed account of the abduction of a minister in 1679, who is styled a "minister of the Empire," and his arrival as a masked prisoner at the islands, and states that he died there in captivity nine years after he was carried off.

Dutens thus divests the episode of the element of the marvellous with which Voltaire had surrounded it. He called to his aid the testimony of the Duc de Choiseul, who, having in vain attempted to worm the secret of the Iron Mask out of Louis XV, begged Madame de Pompadour to try her hand, and was told by her that the prisoner was the *minister of an Italian prince*. At the same time that Dutens wrote, "There is no fact in history better established than the fact that the Man in the Iron Mask was a minister of the Duke of Mantua who was carried off from Turin," M. Quentin-Crawfurd was maintaining that the prisoner was a son of Anne of Austria; while a few years earlier Bouche, a lawyer, in his *Essai sur l'Histoire de Provence* (2 vols. 4to, 1785), had regarded this story as a fable invented by Voltaire, and had convinced himself that the prisoner was *a woman*. As we see, discussion threw no light on the subject, and instead of being dissipated, the confusion became ever "worse confounded."

In 1790 the *Mémoires du Maréchal de Richelieu* appeared. He had left his note-books, his library, and his correspondence to Soulavie. The *Mémoires* are undoubtedly authentic, and have, if not certainty, at least a strong moral presumption in their favour, and gained the belief of men holding diverse opinions. But before placing under the eyes of our readers

extracts from them relating to the Iron Mask, let us refresh our memory by recalling two theories which had not stood the test of thorough investigation.

According to some MS. notes left by M. de Bonac, French ambassador at Constantinople in 1724, the Armenian Patriarch Arwedicks, a mortal enemy of our Church and the instigator of the terrible persecutions to which the Roman Catholics were subjected, was carried off into exile at the request of the Jesuits by a French vessel, and *confined in a prison whence there was no escape.* This prison was the fortress of Sainte-Marguerite, and *from there he was taken to the Bastille, where he died.* The Turkish Government continually clamoured for his release till 1723, but the French Government persistently denied having taken any part in the abduction.

Even if it were not a matter of history that Arwedicks went over to the Roman Catholic Church and died a free man in Paris, as may be seen by an inspection of the certificate of his death preserved among the archives in the Foreign Office, one sentence from the note-book of M. de Bonac would be sufficient to annihilate this theory. M. de Bonac says that the Patriarch was carried off, while M. de Feriol, who succeeded M. de Châteauneuf in 1699, was ambassador at Constantinople. Now it was in 1698 that Saint-Mars arrived at the Bastille with his masked prisoner.

Several English scholars have sided with Gibbon in thinking that the Man in the Iron Mask might possibly have been Henry, the second son of Oliver Cromwell, who was held as a hostage by Louis XIV.

By an odd coincidence the second son of the Lord Protector does entirely disappear from the page of history in 1659; we know nothing of where he afterwards lived nor when he died. But why should he be a prisoner of state in France, while his elder brother Richard was permitted to live there quite openly? In the absence of all proof, we cannot attach the least importance to this explanation of the mystery.

We now come to the promised extracts from the *Mémoires du Maréchal de Richelieu*:—

"Under the late king there was a time when every class of society was asking who the famous personage really was who went by the name of the Iron Mask, but I noticed that this curiosity abated somewhat after his arrival at the Bastille with Saint-Mars, when it began to be reported that orders had been given to kill him should he let his name be known. Saint-Mars also let it be understood that whoever found out the secret would share the same fate. This threat to murder both the prisoner and those who showed too much curiosity about him made such an impression, that during the lifetime of the late king people only spoke of the mystery below their breath. The anonymous author of *Les Mémoires de Perse*, which were published in Holland fifteen years after the death of Louis XIV, was the first who dared to speak publicly of the prisoner and relate some anecdotes about him.

"Since the publication of that work, liberty of speech and the freedom of the press have made great strides, and the shade of Louis XIV having lost its terrors, the case of the Iron Mask is freely discussed, and yet even now, at the end of my life and seventy years after the death of the king, people are still asking who the Man in the Iron Mask really was.

"This question was one I put to the adorable princess, beloved of the regent, who inspired in return only aversion and respect, all her love being given to me. As everyone was persuaded that the regent knew the name, the course of life, and the cause of the imprisonment of the masked prisoner, I, being more venturesome in my curiosity than others, tried through my princess to fathom the secret. She had hitherto constantly repulsed the advances of the Duc d'Orléans, but as the ardour of his passion was thereby in no wise abated, the least glimpse of hope would be sufficient to induce him to grant her everything she asked; I persuaded her, therefore, to let him understand that if he would allow her to read the *Mémoires du Masque* which were in his possession his dearest desires would be fulfilled.

"The Duc d'Orléans had never been known to reveal any secret of state, being unspeakably circumspect, and having been

trained to keep every confidence inviolable by his preceptor Dubois, so I felt quite certain that even the princess would fail in her efforts to get a sight of the memoranda in his possession relative to the birth and rank of the masked prisoner; but what cannot love, and such an ardent love, induce a man to do?

. . . . . .

"To reward her goodness the regent gave the documents into her hands, and she forwarded them to me next day, enclosed in a note written in cipher, which, according to the laws of historical writing, I reproduce in its entirety, vouching for its authenticity; for the princess always employed a cipher when she used the language of gallantry, and this note told me what treaty she had had to sign in order that she might obtain the documents, and the duke the desire of his heart. The details are not admissible in serious history, but, borrowing the modest language of the patriarchal time, I may say that if Jacob, before he obtained possession of the best beloved of Laban's daughters, was obliged to pay the price twice over, the regent drove a better bargain than the patriarch. The note and the memorandum were as follows:—

"'2. 1. 17. 12. 9. 2. 20. 2. 1. 7. 14. 20. 10. 3. 21. 1. 11. 14. 1. 15. 16. 12. 17. 14. 2. 1. 21. 11. 20. 17. 12. 9. 14. 9. 2. 8. 20. 5. 20. 2. 2. 17. 8. 1. 2. 20. 9. 21. 21. 1. 5. 12. 17. 15. 00. 14. 1. 15. 14. 12. 9. 21. 5. 12. 9. 21. 16. 20. 14. 8. 3.

"'NARRATIVE OF THE BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PRINCE WHO WAS SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD BY CARDINALS RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN AND IMPRISONED BY ORDER OF LOUIS XIV.

"'*Drawn up by the Governor of this Prince on his deathbed.*

"'The unfortunate prince whom I brought up and had in charge till almost the end of my life was born on the 5th September 1638 at 8.30 o'clock in the evening, while the king was

at supper. His brother, who is now on the throne, was born at noon while the king was at dinner, but whereas his birth was splendid and public, that of his brother was sad and secret; for the king being informed by the midwife that the queen was about to give birth to a second child, ordered the chancellor, the midwife, the chief almoner, the queen's confessor, and myself to stay in her room to be witnesses of whatever happened, and of his course of action should a second child be born.

"'For a long time already it had been foretold to the king that his wife would give birth to two sons, and some days before, certain shepherds had arrived in Paris, saying they were divinely inspired, so that it was said in Paris that if two dauphins were born it would be the greatest misfortune which could happen to the State. The Archbishop of Paris summoned these soothsayers before him, and ordered them to be imprisoned in Saint-Lazare, because the populace was becoming excited about them—a circumstance which filled the king with care, as he foresaw much trouble to his kingdom. What had been predicted by the soothsayers happened, whether they had really been warned by the constellations, or whether Providence by whom His Majesty had been warned of the calamities which might happen to France interposed. The king had sent a messenger to the cardinal to tell him of this prophecy, and the cardinal had replied that the matter must be considered, that the birth of two dauphins was not impossible, and should such a case arrive, the second must be carefully hidden away, lest in the future desiring to be king he should fight against his brother in support of a new branch of the royal house, and come at last to reign.

"'The king in his suspense felt very uncomfortable, and as the queen began to utter cries we feared a second confinement. We sent to inform the king, who was almost overcome by the thought that he was about to become the father of two dauphins. He said to the Bishop of Meaux, whom he had sent for to minister to the queen, "Do not quit my wife till she is safe; I am in mortal terror." Immediately after he sum-

moned us all, the Bishop of Meaux, the chancellor M. Honorat, Dame Peronète the midwife, and myself, and said to us in presence of the queen, so that she could hear, that we would answer to him with our heads if we made known the birth of a second dauphin; that it was his will that the fact should remain a state secret, to prevent the misfortunes which would else happen, the Salic Law not having declared to whom the inheritance of the kingdom should come in case two eldest sons were born to any of the kings.

"'What had been foretold happened: the queen, while the king was at supper, gave birth to a second dauphin, more dainty and more beautiful than the first, but who wept and wailed unceasingly, as if he regretted to take up that life in which he was afterwards to endure such suffering. The chancellor drew up the report of this wonderful birth, without parallel in our history; but His Majesty not being pleased with its form, burned it in our presence, and the chancellor had to write and rewrite till His Majesty was satisfied. The almoner remonstrated, saying it would be impossible to hide the birth of a prince, but the king returned that he had reasons of state for all he did.

"'Afterwards the king made us register our oath, the chancellor signing it first, then the queen's confessor, and I last. The oath was also signed by the surgeon and midwife who attended on the queen, and the king attached this document to the report, taking both away with him, and I never heard any more of either. I remember that His Majesty consulted with the chancellor as to the form of the oath, and that he spoke for a long time in an undertone to the cardinal: after which the last-born child was given into the charge of the midwife, and as they were always afraid she would babble about his birth, she has told me that they often threatened her with death should she ever mention it: we were also forbidden to speak, even to each other, of the child whose birth we had witnessed.

"'Not one of us has as yet violated his oath; for His Majesty dreaded nothing so much as a civil war brought about by

the two children born together, and the cardinal, who afterwards got the care of the second child into his hands, kept that fear alive. The king also commanded us to examine the unfortunate prince minutely; he had a wart above the left elbow, a mole on the right side of his neck, and a tiny wart on his right thigh; for His Majesty was determined, and rightly so, that in case of the decease of the first-born, the royal infant whom he was entrusting to our care should take his place; wherefore he required our sign-manual to the report of the birth, to which a small royal seal was attached in our presence, and we all signed it after His Majesty, according as he commanded. As to the shepherds who had foretold the double birth, never did I hear another word of them, but neither did I inquire. The cardinal who took the mysterious infant in charge probably got them out of the country.

"'All through the infancy of the second prince Dame Peronète treated him as if he were her own child, giving out that his father was a great nobleman; for everyone saw by the care she lavished on him and the expense she went to, that although unacknowledged he was the cherished son of rich parents, and well cared for.

"'When the prince began to grow up, Cardinal Mazarin, who succeeded Cardinal Richelieu in the charge of the prince's education, gave him into my hands to bring up in a manner worthy of a king's son, but in secret. Dame Peronète continued in his service till her death, and was very much attached to him, and he still more to her. The prince was instructed in my house in Burgundy, with all the care due to the son and brother of a king.

"'I had several conversations with the queen mother during the troubles in France, and Her Majesty always seemed to fear that if the existence of the prince should be discovered during the lifetime of his brother, the young king, malcontents would make it a pretext for rebellion, because many medical men hold that the last-born of twins is in reality the elder, and if so, he was king by right, while many others have a different opinion.

"'In spite of this dread, the queen could never bring herself to destroy the written evidence of his birth, because in case of the death of the young king she intended to have his twin-brother proclaimed. She told me often that the written proofs were in her strong box.

"'I gave the ill-starred prince such an education as I should have liked to receive myself, and no acknowledged son of a king ever had a better. The only thing for which I have to reproach myself is that, without intending it, I caused him great unhappiness; for when he was nineteen years old he had a burning desire to know who he was, and as he saw that I was determined to be silent, growing more firm the more he tormented me with questions, he made up his mind hence-forward to disguise his curiosity and to make me think that he believed himself a love-child of my own. He began to call me 'father,' although when we were alone I often assured him that he was mistaken; but at length I gave up combating this belief, which he perhaps only feigned to make me speak, and allowed him to think he was my son, contradicting him no more; but while he continued to dwell on this subject he was meantime making every effort to find out who he really was. Two years passed thus, when, through an unfortunate piece of forgetfulness on my part, for which I greatly blame myself, he became acquainted with the truth. He knew that the king had lately sent me several messengers, and once having carelessly forgotten to lock up a casket containing letters from the queen and the cardinals, he read part and divined the rest through his natural intelligence; and later confessed to me that he had carried off the letter which told most explicitly of his birth.

"'I can recall that from this time on, his manner to me showed no longer that respect for me in which I had brought him up, but became hectoring and rude, and that I could not imagine the reason of the change, for I never found out that he had searched my papers, and he never revealed to me how he got at the casket, whether he was aided by some workmen whom he did not wish to betray, or had employed other means.

"'One day, however, he unguardedly asked me to show him the portraits of the late and the present king. I answered that those that existed were so poor that I was waiting till better ones were taken before having them in my house.

"'This answer, which did not satisfy him, called forth the request to be allowed to go to Dijon. I found out afterwards that he wanted to see a portrait of the king which was there, and to get to the court, which was just then at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, because of the approaching marriage with the infanta; so that he might compare himself with his brother and see if there were any resemblance between them. Having knowledge of his plan, I never let him out of my sight.

"'The young prince was at this time as beautiful as Cupid, and through the intervention of Cupid himself he succeeded in getting hold of a portrait of his brother. One of the upper servants of the house, a young girl, had taken his fancy, and he lavished such caresses on her and inspired her with so much love, that although the whole household was strictly forbidden to give him anything without my permission, she procured him a portrait of the king. The unhappy prince saw the likeness at once, indeed no one could help seeing it, for the one portrait would serve equally well for either brother, and the sight produced such a fit of fury that he came to me crying out, "There is my brother, and this tells me who I am!" holding out a letter from Cardinal Mazarin which he had stolen from me, and making a great commotion in my house.

"'The dread lest the prince should escape and succeed in appearing at the marriage of his brother made me so uneasy, that I sent off a messenger to the king to tell him that my casket had been opened, and asking for instructions. The king sent back word through the cardinal that we were both to be shut up till further orders, and that the prince was to be made to understand that the cause of our common misfortune was his absurd claim. I have since shared his prison, but I believe that a decree of release has arrived from my heavenly Judge, and for my soul's health and for my ward's sake I make

this declaration, that he may know what measures to take in order to put an end to his ignominious estate should the king die without children. Can any oath imposed under threats oblige one to be silent about such incredible events, which it is nevertheless necessary that posterity should know?'"

Such were the contents of the historical document given by the regent to the princess, and it suggests a crowd of questions. Who was the prince's governor? Was he a Burgundian? Was he simply a landed proprietor, with some property and a country house in Burgundy? How far was his estate from Dijon? He must have been a man of note, for he enjoyed the most intimate confidence at the court of Louis XIII, either by virtue of his office or because he was a favourite of the king, the queen, and Cardinal Richelieu. Can we learn from the list of the nobles of Burgundy what member of their body disappeared from public life along with a young ward whom he had brought up in his own house just after the marriage of Louis XIV? Why did he not attach his signature to the declaration, which appears to be a hundred years old? Did he dictate it when so near death that he had not strength to sign it? How did it find its way out of prison? And so forth.

There is no answer to all these questions, and I, for my part, cannot undertake to affirm that the document is genuine. Abbé Soulavie relates that he one day "pressed the marshal for an answer to some questions on the matter, asking, amongst other things, if it were not true that the prisoner was an elder brother of Louis XIV born without the knowledge of Louis XIII. The marshal appeared very much embarrassed, and although he did not entirely refuse to answer, what he said was not very explanatory. He averred that this important personage was neither the illegitimate brother of Louis XIV, nor the Duke of Monmouth, nor the Comte de Vermandois, nor the Duc de Beaufort, and so on, as so many writers had asserted." He called all their writings mere inventions, but added that almost every one of them had got hold of some

true incidents, as for instance the order to kill the prisoner should he make himself known. Finally he acknowledged that he knew the state secret, and used the following words: "All that I can tell you, abbé, is, that when the prisoner died at the beginning of the century, at a very advanced age, he had ceased to be of such importance as when, at the beginning of his reign, Louis XIV shut him up *for weighty reasons of state.*"

The above was written down under the eyes of the marshal, and when Abbé Soulavie entreated him to say something further which, while not actually revealing the secret, would yet satisfy his questioner's curiosity, the marshal answered, "Read M. de Voltaire's latest writings on the subject, especially his concluding words, and reflect on them."

With the exception of Dulaure, all the critics have treated Soulavie's narrative with the most profound contempt, and we must confess that if it was an invention it was a monstrous one, and that the concoction of the famous note in cipher was abominable. "Such was the great secret; in order to find it out, I had to allow myself 5, 12, 17, 15, 14, 1, three times by 8, 3." But unfortunately for those who would defend the morals of Mademoiselle de Valois, it would be difficult to traduce the character of herself, her lover, and her father, for what one knows of the trio justifies one in believing that the more infamous the conduct imputed to them, the more likely it is to be true. We cannot see the force of the objection that Louvois would not have written in the following terms to Saint-Mars in 1687 about a bastard son of Anne of Austria: "I see no objection to your removing Chevalier de Thézut from the *prison* in which he is confined, and putting your *prisoner* there till the one you are preparing for him is ready to receive him." And we cannot understand those who ask if Saint-Mars, following the example of the minister, would have said of a prince "Until he is installed in the *prison* which is being prepared for him here, which has a chapel adjoining"? Why should he have expressed himself otherwise? Does it evidence an abatement of consideration to call a prisoner a prisoner, and his prison a prison?

A certain M. de Saint-Mihiel published an 8vo volume in 1791, at Strasbourg and Paris, entitled *Le véritable homme, dit au* MASQUE DE FER, *ouvrage dans lequel on fait connaître, sur preuves incontestables, à qui le célèbre infortuné dut le jour, quand et où il naquit.* The wording of the title will give an idea of the bizarre and barbarous jargon in which the whole book is written. It would be difficult to imagine the vanity and self-satisfaction which inspire this new reader of riddles. If he had found the philosopher's stone, or made a discovery which would transform the world, he could not exhibit more pride and pleasure. All things considered, the "incontestable proofs" of his theory do not decide the question definitely, or place it above all attempts at refutation, any more than does the evidence on which the other theories which preceded and followed his rest. But what he lacks before all other things is the talent for arranging and using his materials. With the most ordinary skill he might have evolved a theory which would have defied criticism at least as successfully as the others, and he might have supported it by proofs, which if not incontestable (for no one has produced such), had at least moral presumption in their favour, which has great weight in such a mysterious and obscure affair, in trying to explain, which one can never leave on one side, the respect shown by Louvois to the prisoner, to whom he always spoke standing and with uncovered head.

According to M. de Saint-Mihiel, *the Man in the Iron Mask was a legitimate son of Anne of Austria and Mazarin.*

He avers that Mazarin was only a deacon, and not a priest, when he became cardinal, having never taken priest's orders, according to the testimony of the Princess Palatine, consort of Philip I, Duc d'Orléans, and that it was therefore possible for him to marry, and that he did marry, Anne of Austria in secret.

"Old Madame Beauvais, principal woman of the bed-chamber to the queen mother, knew of this ridiculous marriage, and as the price of her secrecy obliged the queen to comply

with all her whims. To this circumstance the principal bed-chamber women owe the extensive privileges accorded them ever since in this country" (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, 13th September 1713).

"The queen mother, consort of Louis XIII, had done worse than simply to fall in love with Mazarin, she had married him, for he had never been an ordained priest, he had only taken deacon's orders. If he had been a priest his marriage would have been impossible. He grew terribly tired of the good queen mother, and did not live happily with her, which was only what he deserved for making such a marriage" (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, 2nd November 1717).

"She (the queen mother) was quite easy in her conscience about Cardinal Mazarin; he was not in priest's orders, and so could marry. The secret passage by which he reached the queen's rooms every evening still exists in the Palais Royal" (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, 2nd July 1719).

"The queen's manner of conducting affairs is influenced by the passion which dominates her. When she and the cardinal converse together, their ardent love for each other is betrayed by their looks and gestures; it is plain to see that when obliged to part for a time they do it with great reluctance. If what people say is true, that they are properly married, and that their union has been blessed by Père Vincent the missioner, there is no harm in all that goes on between them, either in public or in private" (*Requête civile contre la Conclusion de la Paix*, 1649).

The Man in the Iron Mask told the apothecary in the Bastille that he thought he was about sixty years of age (*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*). Thus he must have been born in 1644, just at the time when Anne of Austria was invested with the royal power, though it was really exercised by Mazarin.

Can we find any incident recorded in history which lends support to the supposition that Anne of Austria had a son whose birth was kept as secret as her marriage to Mazarin?

"In 1644, Anne of Austria being dissatisfied with her apartments in the Louvre, moved to the Palais Royal, which had been left to the king by Richelieu. Shortly after taking up residence there she was very ill with a severe attack of jaundice, which was caused, in the opinion of the doctors, by worry, anxiety, and overwork, and which pulled her down greatly" (*Mémoire de Madame de Motteville*, 4 vols. 12mo, vol. i. p. 194).

"This anxiety, caused by the pressure of public business, was most probably only dwelt on as a pretext for a pretended attack of illness. Anne of Austria had no cause for worry and anxiety till 1649. She did not begin to complain of the despotism of Mazarin till towards the end of 1645" (*Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 272, 273).

"She went frequently to the theatre during her first year of widowhood, but took care to hide herself from view in her box" (*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 342).

Abbé Soulavie, in vol. vi. of the *Mémoires de Richelieu*, published in 1793, controverted the opinions of M. de Saint-Mihiel, and again advanced those which he had published some time before, supporting them by a new array of reasons.

The fruitlessness of research in the archives of the Bastille, and the importance of the political events which were happening, diverted the attention of the public for some years from this subject. In the year 1800, however, the *Magazin encyclopédique* published (vol. vi. p. 472) an article entitled *Mémoires sur les Problèmes historiques, et la Méthode de les résoudre appliquée à celui qui concerne l'Homme au Masque de Fer*, signed C. D. O., in which the author maintained that the prisoner was the first minister of the Duke of Mantua, and says his name was Girolamo Magni.

In the same year an octavo volume of 142 pages was produced by M. Roux-Fazillac. It bore the title *Recherches historiques et critiques sur l'Homme au Masque de Fer, d'où résultent des Notions certaines sur ce prisonnier.* These researches brought to light a secret correspondence relative to

certain negotiations and intrigues, and to the abduction of a secretary of the Duke of Mantua whose name was Matthioli, and not Girolamo Magni.

In 1802 an octavo pamphlet containing 11 pages, of which the author was perhaps Baron Lervière, but which was signed Reth, was published. It took the form of a letter to General Jourdan, and was dated from Turin, and gave many details about Matthioli and his family. It was entitled *Véritable Clef de l'Histoire de l'Homme au Masque de Fer.* It proved that the secretary of the Duke of Mantua was carried off, masked, and imprisoned, by order of Louis XIV in 1679, but it did not succeed in establishing as an undoubted fact that the secretary and the Man in the Iron Mask were one and the same person.

It may be remembered that M. Crawfurd writing in 1798 had said in his *Histoire de la Bastille* (8vo, 474 pages), "I cannot doubt that the Man in the Iron Mask was the son of Anne of Austria, but am unable to decide whether he was a twin-brother of Louis XIV or was born while the king and queen lived apart, or during her widowhood." M. Crawfurd, in his *Mélanges d'Histoire et de Littérature tirés d'un Portefeuille* (quarto 1809, octavo 1817), demolished the theory advanced by Roux-Fazillac.

In 1825, M. Delort discovered in the archives several letters relating to Mattioli, and published his *Histoire de l'Homme au Masque de Fer* (8vo). This work was translated into English by George Agar-Ellis, and retranslated into French in 1830, under the title *Histoire authentique du Prisonnier d'Etat, connu sous le Nom de Masque de Fer.* It is in this work that the suggestion is made that the captive was the second son of Oliver Cromwell.

In 1826, M. de Taulès wrote that, in his opinion, the masked prisoner was none other than the Armenian Patriarch. But six years later the great success of my drama at the Odéon converted nearly everyone to the version of which Soulavie was the chief exponent. The bibliophile Jacob is mistaken in asserting that I followed a tradition preserved in

the family of the Duc de Choiseul; M. le Duc de Bassano sent me a copy made under his personal supervision of a document drawn up for Napoleon, containing the results of some researches made by his orders on the subject of the Man in the Iron Mask. The original MS., as well as that of the *Mémoires du Duc de Richelieu*, were, the duke told me, kept at the Foreign Office. In 1834 the Journal of the *Institut historique* published a letter from M. Auguste Billiard, who stated that he had also made a copy of this document for the late Comte de Montalivet, Home Secretary under the Empire.

M. Dufey (de l'Yonne) gave his *Histoire de la Bastille* to the world in the same year, and was inclined to believe that the prisoner was a son of Buckingham.

Besides the many important personages on whom the famous mask had been placed, there was one whom everyone had forgotten, although his name had been put forward by the minister Chamillart: this was the celebrated Superintendent of Finance, Nicolas Fouquet. In 1837, Jacob, armed with documents and extracts, once more occupied himself with this Chinese puzzle on which so much ingenuity had been lavished, but of which no one had as yet got all the pieces into their places. Let us see if he succeeded better than his forerunners.

The first feeling he awakes is one of surprise. It seems odd that he should again bring up the case of Fouquet, who was condemned to imprisonment for life in 1664, confined in Pignerol under the care of Saint-Mars, and whose death was announced (falsely according to Jacob) on March 23rd, 1680. The first thing to look for in trying to get at the true history of the Mask is a sufficient reason of state to account for the persistent concealment of the prisoner's features till his death; and next, an explanation of the respect shown him by Louvois, whose attitude towards him would have been extraordinary in any age, but was doubly so during the reign of Louis XIV, whose courtiers would have been the last persons in the world to render homage to the misfortunes of a man in

disgrace with their master. Whatever the real motive of the king's anger against Fouquet may have been, whether Louis thought he arrogated to himself too much power, or aspired to rival his master in the hearts of some of the king's mistresses, or even presumed to raise his eyes higher still, was not the utter ruin, the lifelong captivity, of his enemy enough to satiate the vengeance of the king? What could he desire more? Why should his anger, which seemed slaked in 1664, burst forth into hotter flames seventeen years later, and lead him to inflict a new punishment? According to the bibliophile, the king being wearied by the continual petitions for pardon addressed to him by the superintendent's family, ordered them to be told that he was dead, to rid himself of their supplications. Colbert's hatred, says he, was the immediate cause of Fouquet's fall; but even if this hatred hastened the catastrophe, are we to suppose that it pursued the delinquent beyond the sentence, through the long years of captivity, and, renewing its energy, infected the minds of the king and his councillors? If that were so, how shall we explain the respect shown by Louvois? Colbert would not have stood uncovered before Fouquet in prison. Why should Colbert's colleague have done so?

It must, however, be confessed that of all existing theories, this one, thanks to the unlimited learning and research of the bibliophile, has the greatest number of documents with the various interpretations thereof, the greatest profusion of dates, on its side.

For it is certain—

1st, that the precautions taken when Fouquet was sent to Pignerol resembled in every respect those employed later by the custodians of the Iron Mask, both at the Îles Sainte-Marguerite and at the Bastille;

2nd, that the majority of the traditions relative to the masked prisoner might apply to Fouquet;

3rd, that the Iron Mask was first heard of immediately after the announcement of the death of Fouquet in 1680;

4th, that there exists no irrefragable proof that Fouquet's death really occurred in the above year.

The decree of the Court of Justice, dated 20th December 1664, banished Fouquet from the kingdom for life. "But the king was of opinion that it would be dangerous to let the said Fouquet leave the country, in consideration of his intimate knowledge of the most important matters of state. Consequently the sentence of perpetual banishment was *commuted* into that of perpetual imprisonment" (*Recueil des défenses de M. Fouquet*). The instructions signed by the king and remitted to Saint-Mars forbid him to permit Fouquet to hold any spoken or written communication with anyone whatsoever, or to leave his apartments for any cause, not even for exercise. The great mistrust felt by Louvois pervades all his letters to Saint-Mars. The precautions which he ordered to be kept up were quite as stringent as in the case of the Iron Mask.

The report of the discovery of a shirt covered with writing, by a friar, which Abbé Papon mentions, may perhaps be traced to the following extracts from two letters written by Louvois to Saint-Mars: "Your letter has come to hand with the new handkerchief on which M. Fouquet has written" (18th Dec. 1665); "You can tell him that if he continue to employ his table-linen as note-paper he must not be surprised if you refuse to supply him with any more" (21st Nov. 1667).

Père Papon asserts that a valet who served the masked prisoner died in his master's room. Now the man who waited on Fouquet, and who like him was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, died in February 1680 (see letter of Louvois to Saint-Mars, 12th March 1680). Echoes of incidents which took place at Pignerol might have reached the Îles Sainte-Marguerite when Saint-Mars transferred his "former prisoner" from one fortress to the other. The fine clothes and linen, the books, all those luxuries in fact that were lavished on the masked prisoner, were not withheld from Fouquet. The furniture of a second room at Pignerol cost over 1200 livres (see letters of Louvois, 12th Dec. 1665, and 22nd Feb. 1666).

It is also known that until the year 1680 Saint-Mars had only two important prisoners at Pignerol, Fouquet and Lauzun. However, his "former prisoner of Pignerol," according to Du Junca's diary, must have reached the latter fortress before the end of August 1681, when Saint-Mars went to Exilles as governor. So that it was in the interval between the 23rd March 1680, the alleged date of Fouquet's death, and the 1st September 1681, that the Iron Mask appeared at Pignerol, and yet Saint-Mars took only two prisoners to Exilles. One of these was probably the Man in the Iron Mask; the other, who must have been Matthioli, died before the year 1687, for when Saint-Mars took over the governorship in the month of January of that year of the Îles Sainte-Marguerite he brought only *one* prisoner thither with him. "I have taken such good measures to guard my prisoner that I can answer to you for his safety" (Lettres de Saint-Mars à Louvois, 20th January 1687).

In the correspondence of Louvois with Saint-Mars we find, it is true, mention of the death of Fouquet on March 23rd, 1680, but in his later correspondence Louvois never says "the *late* M. Fouquet," but speaks of him, as usual, as "M. Fouquet" simply. Most historians have given as a fact that Fouquet was interred in the same vault as his father in the chapel of Saint-François de Sales in the convent church belonging to the Sisters of the Order of the Visitation-Sainte-Marie, founded in the beginning of the seventeenth century by Madame de Chantal. But proof to the contrary exists; for the subterranean portion of St. Francis's chapel was closed in 1786, the last person interred there being Adélaïde Félicité Brulard, with whom ended the house of Sillery. The convent was shut up in 1790, and the church given over to the Protestants in 1802; who continued to respect the tombs. In 1836 the Cathedral chapter of Bourges claimed the remains of one of their archbishops buried there in the time of the Sisters of Sainte-Marie. On this occasion all the coffins were examined and all the inscriptions carefully copied, but the name of Nicolas Fouquet is absent.

Voltaire says in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, article "Ana," "It is most remarkable that no one knows where the celebrated Fouquet was buried."

But in spite of all these coincidences, this carefully constructed theory was wrecked on the same point on which the theory that the prisoner was either the Duke of Monmouth or the Comte de Vermandois came to grief, viz. a letter from Barbézieux, dated 13th August 1691, in which occur the words, "THE PRISONER WHOM YOU HAVE HAD IN CHARGE FOR TWENTY YEARS." According to this testimony, which Jacob had successfully used against his predecessors, the prisoner referred to could not have been Fouquet, who completed his twenty-seventh year of captivity in 1691, if still alive.

We have now impartially set before our readers all the opinions which have been held in regard to the solution of this formidable enigma. For ourselves, we hold the belief that the Man in the Iron Mask stood on the steps of the throne. Although the mystery cannot be said to be definitely cleared up, one thing stands out firmly established among the mass of conjecture we have collected together, and that is, that wherever the prisoner appeared he was ordered *to wear a mask* on pain of death. His features, therefore, might during half a century have brought about his recognition from one end of France to the other; consequently, during the same space of time there existed in France a face resembling the prisoner's known through all her provinces, even to her most secluded isle.

Whose face could this be, if not that of Louis XIV, twin-brother of the Man in the Iron Mask?

To nullify this simple and natural conclusion strong evidence will be required.

Our task has been limited to that of an examining judge at a trial, and we feel sure that our readers will not be sorry that we have left them to choose amid all the conflicting explanations of the puzzle. No consistent narrative that we might have concocted would, it seems to us, have been half as interesting to them as to allow them to follow the devious paths

opened up by those who entered on the search for the heart of the mystery. Everything connected with the masked prisoner arouses the most vivid curiosity. And what end had we in view? Was it not to denounce a crime and to brand the perpetrator thereof? The facts as they stand are sufficient for our object, and speak more eloquently than if used to adorn a tale or to prove an ingenious theory.

MURAT

MURAT

1815

I

TOULON

ON the 18th June 1815, at the very moment when the destiny of Europe was being decided at Waterloo, a man dressed like a beggar was silently following the road from Toulon to Marseilles.

Arrived at the entrance of the Gorge of Ollioulles, he halted on a little eminence from which he could see all the surrounding country; then either because he had reached the end of his journey, or because, before attempting that forbidding, sombre pass which is called the Thermopylæ of Provence, he wished to enjoy the magnificent view which spread to the southern horizon a little longer, he went and sat down on the edge of the ditch which bordered the road, turning his back on the mountains which rise like an amphitheatre to the north of the town, and having at his feet a rich plain covered with tropical vegetation, exotics of a conservatory, trees and flowers quite unknown in any other part of France.

Beyond this plain, glittering in the last rays of the sun, pale and motionless as a mirror lay the sea, and on the surface of the water glided one brig-of-war, which, taking advantage of a fresh land breeze, had all sails spread, and was bowling along rapidly, making for Italian seas. The beggar followed it eagerly with his eyes until it disappeared between the Cape of Gien and the first of the islands of Hyères, then as the

white apparition vanished he sighed deeply, let his head fall into his hands, and remained motionless and absorbed in his reflections, until the tramplings of a cavalcade made him start; he looked up, shook back his long black hair, as if he wished to get rid of the gloomy thoughts which were overwhelming him, and, looking at the entrance to the gorge from whence the noise came, he soon saw two riders appear, who were no doubt well known to him, for, drawing himself up to his full height, he let fall the stick he was carrying, and folding his arms he turned towards them. On their side the new-comers had hardly seen him before they halted, and the foremost dismounted, threw his bridle to his companion, and uncovering, though fifty paces from the man in rags, advanced respectfully towards him. The beggar allowed him to approach with an air of sombre dignity and without a single movement; then, when he was quite near—

"Well, marshal, have you news for me?" said the beggar.

"Yes, sire," said the other sadly.

"And what are they?"

"Such that I could wish it were anyone but myself to announce them to your Majesty——"

"So the Emperor refuses my services! He forgets the victories of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow?"

"No, sire; but he remembers the treaty of Naples, the taking of Reggio, and the declaration of war of the viceroy of Italy."

The beggar struck his forehead.

"Yes, yes! I daresay he thinks I deserve his reproaches, and yet it seems to me that he ought to remember that there are two men in me—the soldier whom he made his brother, and the brother whom he made a king. . . . Yes, as brother I have treated him ill—very ill, but as king, upon my soul, I could not have acted differently. . . . I had to choose between my sword and my crown, and between a regiment and a people. Listen, Brune: you do not know how it all happened. There was an English fleet, the guns of which were growling in the port, there was a Neapolitan population howling in the streets. If

I had been alone, I would have passed through the fleet with one boat, through the crowd with my sword alone, but I had a wife and children. Yet I hesitated; the idea of being called traitor and deserter caused me to shed more tears than the loss of my throne, or perhaps the death of those I love best, will ever wring from me. . . . And so he will have nothing more to do with me? He refuses me as general, captain, private? Then what is left for me to do?"

"Sire, your Majesty must leave France immediately."

"And if I don't obey?"

"My orders are to arrest you and deliver you up to a court-martial!"

"Old comrade, you will not do that?"

"I shall do it, praying God to strike me dead in the moment I lay hands on you!"

"That's you all over, Brune. You have been able to remain a good, loyal fellow. He did not give you a kingdom, he did not encircle your brow with a band of iron which men call a crown and which drives one mad; he did not place you between your conscience and your family. So I must leave France, begin my vagabond life again, and say farewell to Toulon, which recalls so many memories to me! See, Brune," continued Murat, leaning on the arm of the marshal, "are not the pines yonder as fine as any at the Villa Pamfili, the palms as imposing as any at Cairo, the mountains as grand as any range in the Tyrol? Look to your left, is not Cape Gien something like Castellamare and Sorrento—leaving out Vesuvius? And see, Saint-Mandrier at the farthest point of the gulf, is it not like my rock of Capri, which Lamarque juggled away so cleverly from that idiot of a Sir Hudson Lowe? My God! and I must leave all this! Is there no way of remaining on this little corner of French ground—tell me, Brune!"

"You'll break my heart, sire!" answered the marshal.

"Well, we'll say no more about it. What news?"

"The Emperor has left Paris to join the army. They must be fighting now——"

"Fighting now and I not there! Oh, I feel I could have been of use to him on this battlefield. How I would have gloried in charging those miserable Prussians and dastardly English! Brune, give me a passport, I'll go at full speed, I'll reach the army, I will make myself known to some colonel, I shall say, 'Give me your regiment.' I'll charge at its head, and if the Emperor does not clasp my hand to-night, I'll blow my brains out, I swear I will. Do what I ask, Brune, and however it may end, my eternal gratitude will be yours!"

"I cannot, sire."

"Well, well, say no more about it."

"And your Majesty is going to leave France?"

"I don't know. Obey your orders, marshal, and if you come across me again, have me arrested. That's another way of doing something for me. Life is a heavy burden nowadays. He who will relieve me of it will be welcome. . . . Good-bye, Brune."

He held out his hand to the marshal, who tried to kiss it; but Murat opened his arms, the two old comrades held each other fast for a moment, with swelling hearts and eyes full of tears; then at last they parted. Brune remounted his horse, Murat picked up his stick again, and the two men went away in opposite directions, one to meet his death by assassination at Avignon, the other to be shot at Pizzo. Meanwhile, like Richard III, Napoleon was bartering his crown against a horse at Waterloo.

After the interview that has just been related, Murat took refuge with his nephew, who was called Bonafoux, and who was captain of a frigate; but this retreat could only be temporary, for the relationship would inevitably awake the suspicions of the authorities. In consequence, Bonafoux set about finding a more secret place of refuge for his uncle. He hit on one of his friends, an avocat, a man famed for his integrity, and that very evening Bonafoux went to see him.

After chatting on general subjects, he asked his friend if he had not a house at the seaside, and receiving an affirmative answer, he invited himself to breakfast there the next day; the

proposal naturally enough was agreed to with pleasure. The next day at the appointed hour Bonafoux arrived at Bonette, which was the name of the country house where M. Marouin's wife and daughter were staying. M. Marouin himself was kept by his work at Toulon. After the ordinary greetings, Bonafoux stepped to the window, beckoning to Marouin to rejoin him.

"I thought," he said uneasily, "that your house was by the sea."

"We are hardly ten minutes' walk from it."

"But it is not in sight."

"That hill prevents you from seeing it."

"May we go for a stroll on the beach before breakfast is served?"

"By all means. Well, your horse is still saddled. I will order mine—I will come back for you."

Marouin went out. Bonafoux remained at the window, absorbed in his thoughts. The ladies of the house, occupied in preparations for the meal, did not observe, or did not appear to observe, his preoccupation. In five minutes Marouin came back. He was ready to start. The avocat and his friend mounted their horses and rode quickly down to the sea. On the beach the captain slackened his pace, and riding along the shore for about half an hour, he seemed to be examining the bearings of the coast with great attention. Marouin followed without inquiring into his investigations, which seemed natural enough for a naval officer.

After about an hour the two men went back to the house.

Marouin wished to have the horses unsaddled, but Bonafoux objected, saying that he must go back to Toulon immediately after lunch. Indeed, the coffee was hardly finished before he rose and took leave of his hosts. Marouin, called back to town by his work, mounted his horse too, and the two friends rode back to Toulon together. After riding along for ten minutes, Bonafoux went close to his companion and touched him on the thigh—

"Marouin," he said, "I have an important secret to confide to you."

"Speak, captain. After a father confessor, you know there is no one so discreet as a notary, and after a notary an avocat."

"You can quite understand that I did not come to your country house just for the pleasure of the ride. A more important object, a serious responsibility, preoccupied me; I have chosen you out of all my friends, believing that you were devoted enough to me to render me a great service."

"You did well, captain."

"Let us go straight to the point, as men who respect and trust each other should do. My uncle, King Joachim, is proscribed, he has taken refuge with me; but he cannot remain there, for I am the first person they will suspect. Your house is in an isolated position, and consequently we could not find a better retreat for him. You must put it at our disposal until events enable the king to come to some decision."

"It is at your service," said Marouin.

"Right. My uncle shall sleep there to-night."

"But at least give me time to make some preparations worthy of my royal guest."

"My poor Marouin, you are giving yourself unnecessary trouble, and making a vexatious delay for us. King Joachim is no longer accustomed to palaces and courtiers; he is only too happy nowadays to find a cottage with a friend in it; besides, I have let him know about it, so sure was I of your answer. He is counting on sleeping at your house to-night, and if I try to change his determination now he will see a refusal in what is only a postponement, and you will lose all the credit for your generous and noble action. There—it is agreed: to-night at ten at the Champs de Mars."

With these words the captain put his horse to a gallop and disappeared. Marouin turned his horse and went back to his country house to give the necessary orders for the reception of a stranger whose name he did not mention.

At ten o'clock at night, as had been agreed, Marouin was on the Champs de Mars, then covered with Marshal Brune's field-artillery. No one had arrived yet. He walked up and

down between the gun-carriages until a functionary came to ask what he was doing. He was hard put to it to find an answer: a man is hardly likely to be wandering about in an artillery park at ten o'clock at night for the mere pleasure of the thing. He asked to see the commanding officer. The officer came up: M. Marouin informed him that he was an avocat, attached to the law courts of Toulon, and told him that he had arranged to meet someone on the Champs de Mars, not knowing that it was prohibited, and that he was still waiting for that person. After this explanation, the officer authorised him to remain, and went back to his quarters. The sentinel, a faithful adherent to discipline, continued to pace up and down with his measured step, without troubling any more about the stranger's presence.

A few moments later a group of several persons appeared from the direction of Les Lices. The night was magnificent, and the moon brilliant. Marouin recognised Bonafoux, and went up to him. The captain at once took him by the hand and led him to the king, and speaking in turn to each of them—

"Sire," he said, "here is the friend I told you of."

Then turning to Marouin—

"Here," he said, "is the King of Naples, exile and fugitive, whom I confide to your care. I do not speak of the possibility that some day he may get back his crown, that would deprive you of the credit of your fine action. . . . Now, be his guide —we will follow at a distance. March!"

The king and the lawyer set out at once together. Murat was dressed in a blue coat—semi-military, semi-civil, buttoned to the throat; he wore white trousers and top boots with spurs; he had long hair, moustaches, and thick whiskers, which would reach round his neck.

As they rode along he questioned his host about the situation of his country house and the facility for reaching the sea in case of a surprise. Towards midnight the king and Marouin arrived at Bonette; the royal suite came up in about ten minutes; it consisted of about thirty individuals. After partaking of some light refreshment, this little troop, the last of the court of the deposed king, retired to disperse in the town and

its environs, and Murat remained alone with the women, only keeping one valet named Leblanc.

Murat stayed nearly a month in this retirement, spending all his time in answering the newspapers which accused him of treason to the Emperor. This accusation was his absorbing idea, a phantom, a spectre to him; day and night he tried to shake it off, seeking in the difficult position in which he had found himself all the reasons which it might offer him for acting as he had acted. Meanwhile the terrible news of the defeat at Waterloo had spread abroad. The Emperor who had exiled him was an exile himself, and he was waiting at Rochefort, like Murat at Toulon, to hear what his enemies would decide against him. No one knows to this day what inward prompting Napoleon obeyed when, rejecting the counsels of General Lallemande and the devotion of Captain Bodin, he preferred England to America, and went like a modern Prometheus to be chained to the rock of St. Helena.

We are going to relate the fortuitous circumstance which led Murat to the moat of Pizzo, then we will leave it to fatalists to draw from this strange story whatever philosophical deduction may please them. We, as humble annalists, can only vouch for the truth of the facts we have already related and of those which will follow.

King Louis XVIII remounted his throne, consequently Murat lost all hope of remaining in France; he felt he was bound to go. His nephew Bonafoux fitted out a frigate for the United States under the name of Prince Rocca Romana. The whole suite went on board, and they began to carry on to the boat all the valuables which the exile had been able to save from the shipwreck of his kingdom. First a bag of gold weighing nearly a hundred pounds, a sword-sheath on which were the portraits of the king, the queen, and their children, the deeds of the civil estates of his family bound in velvet and adorned with his arms. Murat carried on his person a belt where some precious papers were concealed, with about a score of unmounted diamonds, which he estimated himself to be worth four millions.

When all these preparations for departure were accomplished,

it was agreed that the next day, the 1st of August, at five o'clock, a boat should fetch the king to the brig from a little bay, ten minutes' walk from the house where he was staying. The king spent the night making out a route for M. Marouin by which he could reach the queen, who was then in Austria, I think.

It was finished just as it was time to leave, and on crossing the threshold of the hospitable house where he had found refuge he gave it to his host, slipped into a volume of a pocket edition of Voltaire. Below the story of *Micromégas* the king had written :[1]—

"Reassure yourself, dear Caroline; although unhappy, I am free. I am departing, but I do not know whither I am bound. Wherever I may be my heart will be with you and my children.

"J. M."

Ten minutes later Murat and his host were waiting on the beach at Bonette for the boat which was to take them out to the ship.

They waited until midday, and nothing appeared; and yet on the horizon they could see the brig which was to be his refuge, unable to lie at anchor on account of the depth of water, sailing along the coast at the risk of giving the alarm to the sentinels.

At midday the king, worn out with fatigue and the heat of the sun, was lying on the beach, when a servant arrived, bringing various refreshments, which Madame Marouin, being very uneasy, had sent at all hazards to her husband. The king took a glass of wine and water and ate an orange, and got up for a moment to see whether the boat he was expecting was nowhere visible on the vastness of the sea. There was not a boat in sight, only the brig tossing gracefully on the horizon, impatient to be off, like a horse awaiting its master.

The king sighed and lay down again on the sand. The servant went back to Bonette with a message summoning M. Marouin's brother to the beach. He arrived in a few minutes,

[1] The volume is still in the hands of M. Marouin, at Toulon.

and almost immediately afterwards galloped off at full speed to Toulon, in order to find out from M. Bonafoux why the boat had not been sent to the king. On reaching the captain's house, he found it occupied by an armed force. They were making a search for Murat.

The messenger at last made his way through the tumult to the person he was in search of, and he heard that the boat had started at the appointed time, and that it must have gone astray in the creeks of Saint Louis and Sainte Marguerite. This was, in fact, exactly what had happened.

By five o'clock M. Marouin had reported the news to his brother and the king. It was bad news. The king had no courage left to defend his life even by flight, he was in a state of prostration which sometimes overwhelms the strongest of men, incapable of making any plan for his own safety, and leaving M. Marouin to do the best he could. Just then a fisherman was coming into harbour singing. Marouin beckoned to him, and he came up.

Marouin began by buying all the man's fish; then, when he had paid him with a few coins, he let some gold glitter before his eyes, and offered him three louis if he would take a passenger to the brig which was lying off the Croix-des-Signaux. The fisherman agreed to do it. This chance of escape gave back Murat all his strength; he got up, embraced Marouin, and begged him to go to the queen with the volume of Voltaire. Then he sprang into the boat, which instantly left the shore.

It was already some distance from the land when the king stopped the man who was rowing and signed to Marouin that he had forgotten something. On the beach lay a bag into which Murat had put a magnificent pair of pistols mounted with silver gilt which the queen had given him, and which he set great store on. As soon as he was within hearing he shouted his reason for returning to his host. Marouin seized the valise, and without waiting for Murat to land he threw it into the boat; the bag flew open, and one of the pistols fell out. The fisherman only glanced once at the royal weapon, but it was enough to make him notice its richness and to arouse his

suspicions. Nevertheless, he went on rowing towards the frigate. M. Marouin seeing him disappear in the distance, left his brother on the beach, and bowing once more to the king, returned to the house to calm his wife's anxieties and to take the repose of which he was in much need.

Two hours later he was awakened. His house was to be searched in its turn by soldiers. They searched every nook and corner without finding a trace of the king. Just as they were getting desperate, the brother came in; Marouin smiled at him, believing the king to be safe, but by the new-comer's expression he saw that some fresh misfortune was in the wind. In the first moment's respite given him by his visitors he went up to his brother.

"Well," he said, "I hope the king is on board?"

"The king is fifty yards away, hidden in the outhouse."

"Why did he come back?"

"The fisherman pretended he was afraid of a sudden squall, and refused to take him off to the brig."

"The scoundrel!"

The soldiers came in again.

They spent the night in fruitless searching about the house and buildings; several times they passed within a few steps of the king, and he could hear their threats and imprecations. At last, half an hour before dawn, they went away. Marouin watched them go, and when they were out of sight he ran to the king. He found him lying in a corner, a pistol clutched in each hand. The unhappy man had been overcome by fatigue and had fallen asleep. Marouin hesitated a moment to bring him back to his wandering, tormented life, but there was not a minute to lose. He woke him.

They went down to the beach at once. A morning mist lay over the sea. They could not see anything two hundred yards ahead. They were obliged to wait. At last the first sunbeams began to pierce this nocturnal mist. It slowly dispersed, gliding over the sea as clouds move in the sky. The king's hungry eye roved over the tossing waters before him, but he saw nothing, yet he could not banish the hope

that somewhere behind that moving curtain he would find his refuge. Little by little the horizon came into view; light wreaths of mist, like smoke, still floated about the surface of the water, and in each of them the king thought he recognised the white sails of his vessel. The last gradually vanished, the sea was revealed in all its immensity, it was deserted. Not daring to delay any longer, the ship had sailed away in the night.

"So," said the king, "the die is cast. I will go to Corsica."

The same day Marshal Brune was assassinated at Avignon.

II

CORSICA

ONCE more on the same beach at Bonette, in the same bay where he had awaited the boat in vain, still attended by his band of faithful followers, we find Murat on the 22nd August in the same year. It was no longer by Napoleon that he was threatened, it was by Louis XVIII that he was proscribed; it was no longer the military loyalty of Marshal Brune who came with tears in his eyes to give notice of the orders he had received, but the ungrateful hatred of M. de Rivière, who had set a price [1] on the head of the man who had saved his own.[2] M. de Rivière had indeed written to the ex-King of Naples advising him to abandon himself to the good faith and humanity of the King of France, but this vague invitation had not seemed sufficient guarantee to the outlaw, especially on the part of one who had allowed the assassination almost before his eyes of a man who carried a safe-conduct signed by himself. Murat knew of the massacre of the Mamelukes at Marseilles, the assassination of Brune at Avignon; he had been warned the day before by the police of Toulon that a formal order for his arrest was out; thus it was impossible that he should remain any longer in France. Corsica, with its hospitable towns, its friendly mountains, its impenetrable forests, was hardly fifty leagues distant; he must reach Corsica, and wait in its towns, mountains, and forests until the crowned heads of Europe should decide the fate of the man they had called brother for seven years.

At ten o'clock at night the king went down to the shore.

[1] 48,000 francs. [2] Conspiracy of Pichegru.

The boat which was to take him across had not reached the rendezvous, but this time there was not the slightest fear that it would fail; the bay had been reconnoitred during the day by three men devoted to the fallen fortunes of the king—Messieurs Blancard, Langlade, and Donadieu, all three naval officers, men of ability and warm heart, who had sworn by their own lives to convey Murat to Corsica, and who were in fact risking their lives in order to accomplish their promise. Murat saw the deserted shore without uneasiness, indeed this delay afforded him a few more moments of patriotic satisfaction.

On this little patch of land, this strip of sand, the unhappy exile clung to his mother France, for once his foot touched the vessel which was to carry him away, his separation from France would be long, if not eternal. He started suddenly amidst these thoughts and sighed: he had just perceived a sail gliding over the waves like a phantom through the transparent darkness of the southern night. Then a sailor's song was heard; Murat recognised the appointed signal, and answered it by burning the priming of a pistol, and the boat immediately ran inshore; but as she drew three feet of water, she was obliged to stop ten or twelve feet from the beach; two men dashed into the water and reached the beach, while a third remained crouching in the sternsheets wrapped in his boat-cloak.

"Well, my good friends," said the king, going towards Blancard and Langlade until he felt the waves wet his feet "the moment is come, is it not? The wind is favourable, the sea calm, we must get to sea."

"Yes," answered Langlade, "yes, we must start; and yet perhaps it would be wiser to wait till to-morrow."

"Why?" asked Murat.

Langlade did not answer, but turning towards the west, he raised his hand, and according to the habit of sailors, he whistled to call the wind.

"That's no good," said Donadieu, who had remained in the boat. "Here are the first gusts; you will have more than you know what to do with in a minute. . . . Take care, Langlade,

take care! Sometimes in calling the wind you wake up a storm."

Murat started, for he thought that this warning which rose from the sea had been given him by the spirit of the waters; but the impression was a passing one, and he recovered himself in a moment.

"All the better," he said; "the more wind we have, the faster we shall go."

"Yes," answered Langlade, "but God knows where it will take us if it goes on shifting like this."

"Don't start to-night, sire," said Blancard, adding his voice to those of his two companions.

"But why not?"

"You see that bank of black cloud there, don't you? Well, at sunset it was hardly visible, now it covers a good part of the sky, in an hour there won't be a star to be seen."

"Are you afraid?" asked Murat.

"Afraid!" answered Langlade. "Of what? Of the storm? I might as well ask if your Majesty is afraid of a cannon-ball. We have demurred solely on your account, sire; do you think sea-dogs like ourselves would delay on account of the storm?"

"Then let us go!" cried Murat, with a sigh.

"Good-bye, Marouin. . . . God alone can reward you for what you have done for me. I am at your orders, gentlemen.

At these words the two sailors seized the king and hoisted him on to their shoulders, and carried him into the sea; in another moment he was on board. Langlade and Blancard sprang in behind him. Donadieu remained at the helm, the two other officers undertook the management of the boat, and began their work by unfurling the sails. Immediately the pinnace seemed to rouse herself like a horse at touch of the spur; the sailors cast a careless glance back, and Murat feeling that they were sailing away, turned towards his host and called for a last time—

"You have your route as far as Trieste. Do not forget my wife! . . . Good-bye—good-bye——!"

"God keep you, sire!" murmured Marouin.

And for some time, thanks to the white sail which gleamed through the darkness, he could follow with his eyes the boat which was rapidly disappearing; at last it vanished altogether. Marouin lingered on the shore, though he could see nothing; then he heard a cry, made faint by the distance; it was Murat's last adieu to France.

When M. Marouin was telling me these details one evening on the very spot where it all happened, though twenty years had passed, he remembered clearly the slightest incidents of the embarkation that night. From that moment he assured me that a presentiment of misfortune seized him; he could not tear himself away from the shore, and several times he longed to call the king back, but, like a man in a dream, he opened his mouth without being able to utter a sound. He was afraid of being thought foolish, and it was not until one o'clock—that is, two and a half hours after the departure of the boat—that he went home with a sad and heavy heart.

The adventurous navigators had taken the course from Toulon to Bastia, and at first it seemed to the king that the sailors' predictions were belied; the wind, instead of getting up, fell little by little, and two hours after the departure the boat was rocking without moving forward or backward on the waves, which were sinking from moment to moment. Murat sadly watched the phosphorescent furrow trailing behind the little boat: he had nerved himself to face a storm, but not a dead calm, and without even interrogating his companions, of whose uneasiness he took no account, he lay down in the boat, wrapped in his cloak, closing his eyes as if he were asleep, and following the flow of his thoughts, which were far more tumultuous than that of the waters. Soon the two sailors, thinking him asleep, joined the pilot, and sitting down beside the helm, they began to consult together.

"You were wrong, Langlade," said Donadieu, "in choosing a craft like this, which is either too small or else too big; in an open boat we can never weather a storm, and without oars we can never make any way in a calm."

"'Fore God! I had no choice. I was obliged to take what

I could get, and if it had not been the season for tunny-fishing I might not even have got this wretched pinnace, or rather I should have had to go into the harbour to find it, and they keep such a sharp look-out that I might well have gone in without coming out again."

"At least it is seaworthy," said Blancard.

"*Pardieu*, you know what nails and planks are when they have been soaked in sea-water for ten years. On any ordinary occasion, a man would rather not go in her from Marseilles to the Château d'If, but on an occasion like this one would willingly go round the world in a nutshell."

"Hush!" said Donadieu. The sailors listened; a distant growl was heard, but it was so faint that only the experienced ear of a sailor could have distinguished it.

"Yes, yes," said Langlade, "it is a warning for those who have legs or wings to regain the homes and nests that they ought never to have left."

"Are we far from the islands?" asked Donadieu quickly.

"About a mile off."

"Steer for them."

"What for?" asked Murat, looking up.

"To put in there, sire, if we can."

"No, no," cried Murat; "I will not land except in Corsica. I will not leave France again. Besides, the sea is calm and the wind is getting up again——"

"Down with the sails!" shouted Donadieu. Instantly Langlade and Blancard jumped forward to carry out the order. The sail slid down the mast and fell in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

"What are you doing?" cried Murat. "Do you forget that I am king and that I command you?"

"Sire," said Donadieu, "there is a king more powerful than you—God; there is a voice which drowns yours—the voice of the tempest: let us save your Majesty if possible, and demand nothing more of us."

Just then a flash of lightning quivered along the horizon, a clap of thunder nearer than the first one was heard, a light

foam appeared on the surface of the water, and the boat trembled like a living thing. Murat began to understand that danger was approaching, then he got up smiling, threw his hat behind him, shook back his long hair, and breathed in the storm like the smell of powder—the soldier was ready for the battle.

"Sire," said Donadieu, "you have seen many a battle, but perhaps you have never watched a storm: if you are curious about it, cling to the mast, for you have a fine opportunity now."

"What ought I to do?" said Murat. "Can I not help you in any way?"

"No, not just now, sire; later you will be useful at the pumps."

During this dialogue the storm had drawn near; it rushed on the travellers like a war-horse, breathing out fire and wind through its nostrils, neighing like thunder, and scattering the foam of the waves beneath its feet.

Donadieu turned the rudder, the boat yielded as if it understood the necessity for prompt obedience, and presented the poop to the shock of wind; then the squall passed, leaving the sea quivering, and everything was calm again. The storm took breath.

"Will that gust be all?" asked Murat.

"No, your Majesty, that was the advance-guard only; the body of the army will be up directly."

"And are you not going to prepare for it?" asked the king gaily.

"What could we do?" said Donadieu. "We have not an inch of canvas to catch the wind, and as long as we do not make too much water, we shall float like a cork. Look out—sire!"

Indeed, a second hurricane was on its way, bringing rain and lightning; it was swifter than the first. Donadieu endeavoured to repeat the same manœuvre, but he could not turn before the wind struck the boat, the mast bent like a reed; the boat shipped a wave.

"To the pumps!" cried Donadieu. "Sire, now is the moment to help us——"

Blancard, Langlade, and Murat seized their hats and began

to bale out the boat. The position of the four men was terrible—it lasted three hours.

At dawn the wind fell, but the sea was still high. They began to feel the need of food: all the provisions had been spoiled by sea-water, only the wine had been preserved from its contact.

The king took a bottle and swallowed a little wine first, then he passed it to his companions, who drank in their turn: necessity had overcome etiquette. By chance Langlade had on him a few chocolates, which he offered to the king. Murat divided them into four equal parts, and forced his companions to take their shares; then, when the meal was over, they steered for Corsica, but the boat had suffered so much that it was improbable that it would reach Bastia.

The whole day passed without making ten miles; the boat was kept under the jib, as they dared not hoist the mainsail, and the wind was so variable that much time was lost in humouring its caprices.

By evening the boat had drawn a considerable amount of water, it penetrated between the boards, the handkerchiefs of the crew served to plug up the leaks, and night, which was descending in mournful gloom, wrapped them a second time in darkness. Prostrated with fatigue, Murat fell asleep, Blancard and Langlade took their places beside Donadieu, and the three men, who seemed insensible to the calls of sleep and fatigue, watched over his slumbers.

The night was calm enough apparently, but low grumblings were heard now and then.

The three sailors looked at each other strangely and then at the king, who was sleeping at the bottom of the boat, his cloak soaked with sea-water, sleeping as soundly as he had slept on the sands of Egypt or the snows of Russia.

Then one of them got up and went to the other end of the boat, whistling between his teeth a Provençal air; then, after examining the sky, the waves, and the boat, he went back to his comrades and sat down, muttering, "Impossible! Except by a miracle, we shall never make the land."

The night passed through all its phases. At dawn there was a vessel in sight.

"A sail!" cried Donadieu,—"a sail!"

At this cry the king awoke; and soon a little trading brig hove in sight, going from Corsica to Toulon.

Donadieu steered for the brig, Blancard hoisted enough sail to work the boat, and Langlade ran to the prow and held up the king's cloak on the end of a sort of harpoon. Soon the voyagers perceived that they had been sighted, the brig went about to approach them, and in ten minutes they found themselves within fifty yards of it. The captain appeared in the bows. Then the king hailed him and offered him a substantial reward if he would receive them on board and take them to Corsica. The captain listened to the proposal; then immediately turning to the crew, he gave an order in an undertone which Donadieu could not hear, but which he understood probably by the gesture, for he instantly gave Langlade and Blancard the order to make away from the schooner. They obeyed with the unquestioning promptitude of sailors; but the king stamped his foot.

"What are you doing, Donadieu? What are you about? Don't you see that she is coming up to us?"

"Yes—upon my soul—so she is. . . . Do as I say, Langlade; ready, Blancard. Yes, she is coming upon us, and perhaps I was too late in seeing this. That's all right—that's all right: my part now."

Then he forced over the rudder, giving it so violent a jerk that the boat, forced to change her course suddenly, seemed to rear and plunge like a horse struggling against the curb; finally she obeyed. A huge wave, raised by the giant bearing down on the pinnace, carried it on like a leaf, and the brig passed within a few feet of the stern.

"Ah! . . . traitor!" cried the king, who had only just begun to realise the intention of the captain. At the same time, he pulled a pistol from his belt, crying "Board her! board her!" and tried to fire on the brig, but the powder was wet and would not catch. The king was

furious, and went on shouting "Board her! board her!"

"Yes, the wretch, or rather the imbecile," said Donadieu, "he took us for pirates, and wanted to sink us—as if we needed him to do that!"

Indeed, a single glance at the boat showed that she was beginning to make water.

The effort to escape which Donadieu had made had strained the boat terribly, and the water was pouring in by a number of leaks between the planks; they had to begin again baling out with their hats, and went on at it for ten hours. Then for the second time Donadieu heard the consoling cry, "A sail! a sail!" The king and his companions immediately left off baling; they hoisted the sails again, and steered for the vessel which was coming towards them, and neglected to fight against the water, which was rising rapidly.

From that time forth it was a question of time, of minutes, of seconds; it was a question of reaching the ship before the boat foundered.

The vessel, however, seemed to understand the desperate position of the men imploring help; she was coming up at full speed. Langlade was the first to recognise her; she was a Government felucca plying between Toulon and Bastia. Langlade was a friend of the captain, and he called his name with the penetrating voice of desperation, and he was heard. It was high time: the water kept on rising, and the king and his companions were already up to their knees; the boat groaned in its death-strnggle; it stood still, and began to go round and round.

Just then two or three ropes thrown from the felucca fell upon the boat; the king seized one, sprang forward, and reached the rope-ladder: he was saved.

Blancard and Langlade immediately followed. Donadieu waited until the last, as was his duty, and as he put his foot on the ladder he felt the other boat begin to go under; he turned round with all a sailor's calm, and saw the gulf open its jaws beneath him, and then the shattered boat capsized, and

immediately disappeared. Five seconds more, and the four men who were saved would have been lost beyond recall![1]

Murat had hardly gained the deck before a man came and fell at his feet: it was a Mameluke whom he had taken to Egypt in former years, who had since married at Castellamare; business affairs had taken him to Marseilles, where by a miracle he had escaped the massacre of his comrades, and in spite of his disguise and fatigue he had recognised his former master.

His exclamations of joy prevented the king from keeping up his incognito. Then Senator Casabianca, Captain Oletta, a nephew of Prince Baciocchi, a staff-paymaster called Boërco, who were themselves fleeing from the massacres of the South, were all on board the vessel, and improvising a little court, they greeted the king with the title of "your Majesty." It had been a sudden embarkation, it brought about a swift change: he was no longer Murat the exile; he was Joachim I, the King of Naples. The exile's refuge disappeared with the foundered boat; in its place Naples and its magnificent gulf appeared on the horizon like a marvellous mirage, and no doubt the primary idea of the fatal expedition of Calabria was originated in the first days of exultation which followed those hours of anguish. The king, however, still uncertain of the welcome which awaited him in Corsica, took the name of the Count of Campo Melle, and it was under this name that he landed at Bastia on the 25th August. But this precaution was useless; three days after his arrival, not a soul but knew of his presence in the town.

Crowds gathered at once, and cries of "Long live Joachim!" were heard, and the king, fearing to disturb the public peace, left Bastia the same evening with his three companions and his Mameluke. Two hours later he arrived at Viscovato, and knocked at the door of General Franceschetti, who had been in his service during his whole reign, and who, leaving Naples

[1] These details are well known to the people of Toulon, and I have heard them myself a score of times during the two stays that I made in that town during 1834 and 1835. Some of the people who related them had them first-hand from Langlade and Donadieu themselves.

at the same time as the king, had gone to Corsica with his wife, to live with his father-in-law, M. Colonna Cicaldi.

He was in the middle of supper when a servant told him that a stranger was asking to speak to him: he went out, and found Murat wrapped in a military greatcoat, a sailor's cap drawn down on his head, his beard grown long, and wearing a soldier's trousers, boots, and gaiters.

The general stood still in amazement; Murat fixed his great dark eyes on him, and then, folding his arms—

"Franceschetti," said he, "have you room at your table for your general, who is hungry? Have you a shelter under your roof for your king, who is an exile?"

Franceschetti looked astonished as he recognised Joachim, and could only answer him by falling on his knees and kissing his hand. From that moment the general's house was at Murat's disposal.

The news of the king's arrival had hardly been handed about the neighbourhood before officers of all ranks hastened to Viscovato, veterans who had fought under him, Corsican hunters who were attracted by his adventurous character; in a few days the general's house was turned into a palace, the village into a royal capital, the island into a kingdom.

Strange rumours were heard concerning Murat's intentions. An army of nine hundred men helped to give them some amount of confirmation. It was then that Blancard, Donadieu, and Langlade took leave of him; Murat wished to keep them, but they had been vowed to the rescue of the exile, not to the fortunes of the king.

We have related how Murat had met one of his former Mamelukes, a man called Othello, on board the Bastia mail-boat. Othello had followed him to Viscovato, and the ex-King of Naples considered how to make use of him. Family relations recalled him naturally to Castellamare, and Murat ordered him to return there, entrusting to him letters for persons on whose devotion he could depend. Othello started, and reached his father-in-law's safely, and thought he could confide in him; but the latter was horror-struck, and alarmed the

police, who made a descent on Othello one night, and seized the letters.

The next day each man to whom a letter was addressed was arrested and ordered to answer Murat as if all was well, and to point out Salerno as the best place for disembarking: five out of seven were dastards enough to obey; the two remaining, who were two Spanish brothers, absolutely refused; they were thrown into a dungeon.

However, on the 17th September, Murat left Viscovato; General Franceschetti and several Corsican officers served as escort; he took the road to Ajaccio by Cotone, the mountains of Serra and Bosco, Venaco and Vivaro, by the gorges of the forest of Vezzanovo and Bogognone; he was received and fêted like a king everywhere, and at the gates of the towns he was met by deputations who made him speeches and saluted him with the title of "Majesty"; at last, on the 23rd September, he arrived at Ajaccio. The whole population awaited him outside the walls, and his entry into the town was a triumphal procession; he was taken to the inn which had been fixed upon beforehand by the quartermasters. It was enough to turn the head of a man less impressionable than Murat; as for him, he was intoxicated with it. As he went into the inn he held out his hand to Franceschetti.

"You see," he said, "what the Neapolitans will do for me by the way the Corsicans receive me."

It was the first mention which had escaped him of his plans for the future, and from that very day he began to give orders for his departure.

They collected ten little feluccas: a Maltese, named Barbara, former captain of a frigate of the Neapolitan navy, was appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition; two hundred and fifty men were recruited and ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the first signal.

Murat was only waiting for the answers to Othello's letters: they arrived on the afternoon of the 28th. Murat invited all his officers to a grand dinner, and ordered double pay and double rations to the men.

The king was at dessert when the arrival of M. Maceroni was announced to him: he was the envoy of the foreign powers who brought Murat the answer which he had been awaiting so long at Toulon. Murat left the table and went into another room. M. Maceroni introduced himself as charged with an official mission, and handed the king the Emperor of Austria's ultimatum. It was couched in the following terms:—

"Monsieur Maceroni is authorised by these presents to announce to King Joachim that His Majesty the Emperor of Austria will afford him shelter in his States on the following terms:

"1. The king is to take a private name. The queen having adopted that of Lipano, it is proposed that the king should do likewise.

"2. It will be permitted to the king to choose a town in Bohemia, Moravia, or the Tyrol, as a place of residence. He could even inhabit a country house in one of these same provinces without inconvenience.

"3. The king is to give his word of honour to His Imperial and Royal Majesty that he will never leave the States of Austria without the express permission of the Emperor, and that he is to live like a private gentleman of distinction, but submitting to the laws in force in the States of Austria.

"In attestation whereof, and to guard against abuse, the undersigned has received the order of the Emperor to sign the present declaration.

"(*Signed*) PRINCE OF METTERNICH

"PARIS, *1st Sept.* 1815"

Murat smiled as he finished reading, then he signed to M. Maceroni to follow him.

He led him on to the terrace of the house, which looked over the whole town, and over which a banner floated as it might on a royal castle. From thence they could see Ajaccio, all gay and illuminated, the port with its little fleet, and the streets crowded with people, as if it were a fête-day.

Hardly had the crowd set eyes on Murat before a universal cry arose, "Long live Joachim, brother of Napoleon! Long live the King of Naples!" Murat bowed, and the shouts were redoubled, and the garrison band played the national airs.

M. Maceroni did not know how to believe his own eyes and ears.

When the king had enjoyed his astonishment, he invited him to go down to the drawing-room. His staff were there, all in full uniform: one might have been at Caserte or at Capo di Monte. At last, after a moment's hesitation, Maceroni approached Murat.

"Sir," he said, "what is my answer to be to His Majesty the Emperor of Austria?"

"Sir," answered Murat, with the lofty dignity which sat so well on his fine face, "tell my brother Francis what you have seen and heard, and add that I am setting out this very night to reconquer my kingdom of Naples."

III

PIZZO

THE letters which had made Murat resolve to leave Corsica had been brought to him by a Calabrian named Luidgi. He had presented himself to the king as the envoy of the Arab, Othello, who had been thrown into prison in Naples, as we have related, as well as the seven recipients of the letters.

The answers, written by the head of the Neapolitan police, indicated the port of Salerno as the best place for Joachim to land; for King Ferdinand had assembled three thousand Austrian troops at that point, not daring to trust the Neapolitan soldiers, who cherished a brilliant and enthusiastic memory of Murat.

Accordingly the flotilla was directed for the Gulf of Salerno, but within sight of the island of Capri a violent storm broke over it, and drove it as far as Paola, a little seaport situated ten miles from Cosenza. Consequently the vessels were anchored for the night of the 5th of October in a little indentation of the coast not worthy of the name of a roadstead. The king, to remove all suspicion from the coastguards and the Sicilian *scorridori*,[1] ordered that all lights should be extinguished and that the vessels should tack about during the night; but towards one o'clock such a violent land-wind sprang up that the expedition was driven out to sea, so that on the 6th at dawn the king's vessel was alone.

During the morning they overhauled Captain Cicconi's felucca, and the two ships dropped anchor at four o'clock in

[1] Small vessels fitted up as ships-of-war.

sight of Santo-Lucido. In the evening the king commanded Ottoviani, a staff officer, to go ashore and reconnoitre. Luidgi offered to accompany him. Murat accepted his services. So Ottoviani and his guide went ashore, whilst Cicconi and his felucca put out to sea in search of the rest of the fleet.

Towards eleven o'clock at night the lieutenant of the watch descried a man in the waves swimming to the vessel. As soon as he was within hearing the lieutenant hailed him. The swimmer immediately made himself known: it was Luidgi. They put out the boat, and he came on board. Then he told them that Ottoviani had been arrested, and he had only escaped himself by jumping into the sea. Murat's first idea was to go to the rescue of Ottoviani; but Luidgi made the king realise the danger and uselessness of such an attempt; nevertheless, Joachim remained agitated and irresolute until two o'clock in the morning.

At last he gave the order to put out to sea again. During the manœuvre which effected this a sailor fell overboard and disappeared before they had time to help him. Decidedly these were ill omens.

On the morning of the 7th two vessels were in sight. The king gave the order to prepare for action, but Barbara recognised them as Cicconi's felucca and Courrand's lugger, which had joined each other and were keeping each other company. They hoisted the necessary signals, and the two captains brought up their vessels alongside the admiral's.

While they were deliberating as to what route to follow, a boat came up to Murat's vessel. Captain Pernice was on board with a lieutenant. They came to ask the king's permission to board his ship, not wishing to remain on Courrand's, for in their opinion he was a traitor.

Murat sent to fetch him, and in spite of his protestations he was made to descend into a boat with fifty men, and the boat was moored to the vessel. The order was carried out at once, and the little squadron advanced, coasting along the shores of Calabria without losing sight of them; but at ten o'clock in

the evening, just as they came abreast of the Gulf of Santa-Eufemia, Captain Courrand cut the rope which moored his boat to the vessel, and rowed away from the fleet.

Murat had thrown himself on to his bed without undressing; they brought him the news.

He rushed up to the deck, and arrived in time to see the boat, which was fleeing in the direction of Corsica, grow small and vanish in the distance. He remained motionless, not uttering a cry, giving no signs of rage; he only sighed and let his head fall on his breast: it was one more leaf falling from the exhausted tree of his hopes.

General Franceschetti profited by this hour of discouragement to advise him not to land in Calabria, and to go direct to Trieste, in order to claim from Austria the refuge which had been offered.

The king was going through one of those periods of extreme exhaustion, of mortal depression, when courage quite gives way: he refused flatly at first, and then at last agreed to do it.

Just then the general perceived a sailor lying on some coils of ropes, within hearing of all they said; he interrupted himself, and pointed him out to Murat.

The latter got up, went to see the man, and recognised Luidgi; overcome with exhaustion, he had fallen asleep on deck. The king satisfied himself that the sleep was genuine, and besides he had full confidence in the man. The conversation, which had been interrupted for a moment, was renewed: it was agreed that without saying anything about the new plans, they would clear Cape Spartivento and enter the Adriatic; then the king and the general went below again to the lower deck.

The next day, the 8th October, they found themselves abreast of Pizzo, when Joachim, questioned by Barbara as to what he proposed to do, gave the order to steer for Messina. Barbara answered that he was ready to obey, but that they were in need of food and water; consequently he offered to go on board Cicconi's vessel and to land with him to get stores. The king agreed; Barbara asked for the passports which he had

received from the allied powers, in order, he said, not to be molested by the local authorities.

These documents were too important for Murat to consent to part with them; perhaps the king was beginning to suspect: he refused. Barbara insisted: Murat ordered him to land without the papers; Barbara flatly refused.

The king, accustomed to being obeyed, raised his riding-whip to strike the Maltese, but, changing his resolution, he ordered the soldiers to prepare their arms, the officers to put on full uniform; he himself set the example. The disembarkation was decided upon, and Pizzo was to become the Golfe Juan of the new Napoleon.

Consequently the vessels were steered for land. The king got down into a boat with twenty-eight soldiers and three servants, amongst whom was Luidgi. As they drew near the shore General Franceschetti made a movement as if to land, but Murat stopped him.

"It is for me to land first," he said, and he sprang on shore.

He was dressed in a general's coat, white breeches and riding-boots, a belt carrying two pistols, a gold-embroidered hat with a cockade fastened in with a clasp made of fourteen brilliants, and lastly he carried under his arm the banner round which he hoped to rally his partisans. The town clock of Pizzo struck ten. Murat went straight up to the town, from which he was hardly a hundred yards distant. He followed the wide stone staircase which led up to it.

It was Sunday. Mass was about to be celebrated, and the whole population had assembled in the Great Square when he arrived. No one recognised him, and everyone gazed with astonishment at the fine officer. Presently he saw amongst the peasants a former sergeant of his who had served in his guard at Naples. He walked straight up to him and put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Tavella," he said, "don't you recognise me?" But as the man made no answer—

"I am Joachim Murat, I am your king," he said. "Yours be the honour to shout 'Long live Joachim!' first."

Murat's suite instantly made the air ring with acclamations, but the Calabrians remained silent, and not one of his comrades took up the cry for which the king himself had given the signal; on the contrary, a low murmur ran through the crowd. Murat well understood this forerunner of the storm.

"Well," he said to Tavella, "if you won't cry 'Long live Joachim!' you can at least fetch me a horse, and from sergeant I will promote you to be captain."

Tarella walked away without answering, but instead of carrying out the king's behest, went into his house, and did not appear again.

In the meantime the people were massing together without evincing any of the sympathy that the king had hoped for. He felt that he was lost if he did not act instantly.

"To Monteleone!" he cried, springing forward towards the road which led to that town.

"To Monteleone!" shouted his officers and men, as they followed him.

And the crowd, persistently silent, opened to let them pass.

But they had hardly left the square before a great disturbance broke out. A man named Giorgio Pellegrino came out of his house with a gun and crossed the square, shouting, "To your arms!"

He knew that Captain Trenta Capelli commanding the Cosenza garrison was just then in Pizzo, and he was going to warn him.

The cry "To arms!" had more effect on the crowd than the cry "Long live Joachim!"

Every Calabrian possesses a gun, and each one ran to fetch his, and when Trenta Capelli and Giorgio Pellegrino came back to the square they found nearly two hundred armed men there.

They placed themselves at the head of the column, and hastened forward in pursuit of the king; they came up with him about ten minutes from the square, where the bridge is nowadays. Seeing them, Murat stopped and waited for them.

Trenta Capelli advanced, sword in hand, towards the king.

"Sir," said the latter, "will you exchange your captain's

epaulettes for a general's? Cry 'Long live Joachim!' and follow me with these brave fellows to Monteleone."

"Sire," said Trenta Capelli, "we are the faithful subjects of King Ferdinand, and we come to fight you, and not to bear you company. Give yourself up, if you would prevent bloodshed."

Murat looked at the captain with an expression which it would be impossible to describe; then, without deigning to answer, he signed to Capelli to move away, while his other hand went to his pistol. Giorgio Pellegrino perceived the movement.

"Down, captain, down!" he cried. The captain obeyed. Immediately a bullet whistled over his head and brushed past Murat's head.

"Fire!" commanded Franceschetti.

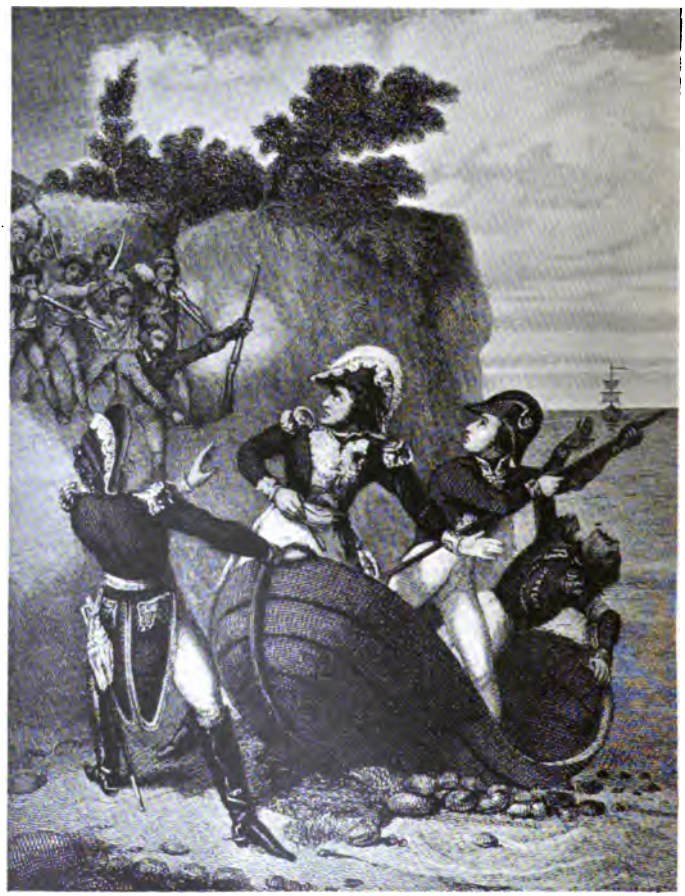
"Down with your arms!" cried Murat.

Waving his handkerchief in his right hand, he made a step towards the peasants, but at the same moment a number of shots were fired, an officer and two or three men fell. In a case like this, when blood has begun to flow, there is no stopping it. Murat knew this fatal truth, and his course of action was rapidly decided on. Before him he had five hundred armed men, and behind him a precipice thirty feet high: he sprang from the jagged rock on which he was standing, and alighting on the sand, jumped up safe and sound. General Franceschetti and his aide-de-camp Campana were able to accomplish the jump in the same way, and all three went rapidly down to the sea through the little wood which lay within a hundred yards of the shore, and which hid them for a few moments from their enemies.

As they came out of the wood a fresh discharge greeted them, bullets whistled round them, but no one was hit, and the three fugitives went on down to the beach.

It was only then that the king perceived that the boat which had brought them to land had gone off again. The three ships which composed the fleet, far from remaining to guard his landing, were sailing away at full speed into the open sea.

The Maltese, Barbara, was going off not only with Murat's



Rouvdet, del. *Boilly, sculp.*

THE ESCAPE OF MURAT

fortune, but with his hopes likewise, his salvation, his very life. They could not believe in such treachery, and the king took it for some manœuvre of seamanship, and seeing a fishing-boat drawn up on the beach on some nets, he called to his two companions, "Launch that boat!"

They all began to push it down to the sea with the energy of despair, the strength of agony.

No one had dared to leap from the rock in pursuit of them; their enemies, forced to make a détour, left them a few moments of liberty.

But soon shouts were heard: Giorgio Pellegrino, Trenta Capelli, followed by the whole population of Pizzo, rushed out about a hundred and fifty paces from where Murat, Franceschetti, and Campana were straining themselves to make the boat glide down the sand.

These cries were immediately followed by a volley. Campana fell, with a bullet through his heart.

The boat, however, was launched. Franceschetti sprang into it, Murat was about to follow, but he had not observed that the spurs of his riding-boots had caught in the meshes of the net. The boat, yielding to the push he gave it, glided away, and the king fell head foremost, with his feet on land and his face in the water. Before he had time to pick himself up, the populace had fallen on him: in one instant they had torn away his epaulettes, his banner, and his coat, and would have torn him to bits himself, had not Giorgio Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli taken him under their protection, and giving him an arm on each side, defended him in their turn against the people. Thus he crossed the square as a prisoner where an hour before he had walked as a king.

His captors took him to the castle: he was pushed into the common prison, the door was shut upon him, and the king found himself among thieves and murderers, who, not knowing him, took him for a companion in crime, and greeted him with foul language and hoots of derision.

A quarter of an hour later the door of the gaol opened and Commander Mattei came in: he found Murat standing with

head proudly erect and folded arms. There was an expression of indefinable loftiness in this half-naked man whose face was stained with blood and bespattered with mud. Mattei bowed before him.

"Commander," said Murat, recognising his rank by his epaulettes, "look round you and tell me whether this is a prison for a king."

Then a strange thing happened: the criminals, who, believing Murat their accomplice, had welcomed him with vociferations and laughter, now bent before his royal majesty, which had not overawed Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli, and retired silently to the depths of their dungeon.

Misfortune had invested Murat with a new power.

Commander Mattei murmured some excuse, and invited Murat to follow him to a room that he had had prepared for him; but before going out, Murat put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a handful of gold and let it fall in a shower in the midst of the gaol.

"See," he said, turning towards the prisoners, "it shall not be said that you have received a visit from a king, prisoner and crownless as he is, without having received largesse."

"Long live Joachim!" cried the prisoners.

Murat smiled bitterly. Those same words repeated by the same number of voices an hour before in the public square, instead of resounding in the prison, would have made him King of Naples.

The most important events proceed sometimes from such mere trifles, that it seems as if God and the devil must throw dice for the life or death of men, for the rise or fall of empires.

Murat followed Commander Mattei: he led him to a little room which the porter had put at his disposal. Mattei was going to retire when Murat called him back.

"Commander," he said, "I want a scented bath."

"Sire, it will be difficult to obtain."

"Here are fifty ducats; let someone buy all the eau de Cologne that can be obtained. Ah—and let some tailors be sent to me."

"It will be impossible to find anyone here capable of making anything but a peasant's clothes."

"Send someone to Monteleone to fetch them from there."

The commander bowed and went out.

Murat was in his bath when the Cavaliere Alcala was announced, a General and Governor of the town. He had sent damask coverlets, curtains, and arm-chairs. Murat was touched by this attention, and it gave him fresh composure. At two o'clock the same day General Nunziante arrived from Santa-Tropea with three thousand men. Murat greeted his old acquaintance with pleasure; but at the first word the king perceived that he was before his judge, and that he had not come for the purpose of making a visit, but to make an official inquiry.

Murat contented himself with stating that he had been on his way from Corsica to Trieste with a passport from the Emperor of Austria when stormy weather and lack of provisions had forced him to put into Pizzo. All other questions Murat met with a stubborn silence; then at last, wearied by his importunity—

"General," he said, "can you lend me some clothes after my bath?"

The general understood that he could expect no more information, and, bowing to the king, he went out. Ten minutes later, a complete uniform was brought to Murat; he put it on immediately, asked for a pen and ink, wrote to the commander-in-chief of the Austrian troops at Naples, to the English ambassador, and to his wife, to tell them of his detention at Pizzo. These letters written, he got up and paced his room for some time in evident agitation; at last, needing fresh air, he opened the window. There was a view of the very beach where he had been captured.

Two men were digging a hole in the sand at the foot of the little redoubt. Murat watched them mechanically. When the two men had finished, they went into a neighbouring house and soon came out, bearing a corpse in their arms.

The king searched his memory, and indeed it seemed to him that in the midst of that terrible scene he had seen someone

fall, but who it was he no longer remembered. The corpse was quite without covering, but by the long black hair and youthful outlines the king recognised Campana, the aide-de-camp he had always loved best.

This scene, watched from a prison window in the twilight, this solitary burial on the shore, in the sand, moved Murat more deeply than his own fate. Great tears filled his eyes and fell silently down the leonine face. At that moment General Nunziante came in and surprised him with outstretched arms and face bathed with tears. Murat heard him enter and turned round, and seeing the old soldier's surprise—

"Yes, general," he said, "I weep; I weep for that boy, just twenty-four, entrusted to me by his parents, whose death I have brought about. I weep for that vast, brilliant future which is buried in an unknown grave, in an enemy's country, on a hostile shore. Oh, Campana! Campana! if ever I am king again, I will raise you a royal tomb."

The general had had dinner served in an adjacent room. Murat followed him and sat down to table, but he could not eat. The sight which he had just witnessed had made him heart-broken, and yet without a line on his brow that man had been through the battles of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow! After dinner, Murat went into his room again, gave his various letters to General Nunziante, and begged to be left alone. The general went away.

Murat paced round his room several times, walking with long steps, and pausing from time to time before the window, but without opening it.

At last he overcame a deep reluctance, put his hand on the bolt and drew the lattice towards him.

It was a calm, clear night: one could see the whole shore. He looked for Campana's grave. Two dogs scratching the sand showed him the spot.

The king shut the window violently, and without undressing threw himself onto his bed. At last, fearing that his agitation would be attributed to personal alarm, he undressed and went to bed, to sleep, or seem to sleep all night.

On the morning of the 9th the tailors whom Murat had asked for arrived. He ordered a great many clothes, taking the trouble to explain all the details suggested by his fastidious taste. He was thus employed when General Nunziante came in. He listened sadly to the king's commands. He had just received telegraphic despatches ordering him to try the King of Naples by court-martial as a public enemy. But he found the king so confident, so tranquil, almost cheerful indeed, that he had not the heart to announce his trial to him, and took upon himself to delay the opening of operations until he received written instructions. These arrived on the evening of the 12th. They were couched in the following terms:—

"NAPLES, *October* 9, 1815

"Ferdinand, by the grace of God, etc. . . . wills and decrees the following:—

"Art. 1. General Murat is to be tried by court-martial, the members whereof are to be nominated by our Minister of War.

"Art. 2. Only half an hour is to be accorded to the condemned for the exercises of religion.

"(*Signed*) FERDINAND"

Another despatch from the minister contained the names of the members of the commission. They were:—

Giuseppe Fosculo, adjutant, commander-in-chief of the staff, president.

Laffaello Scalfaro, chief of the legion of Lower Calabria.

Latereo Natali, lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Marines.

Gennaro Lanzetta, lieutenant-colonel of the Engineers.

W. T., captain of Artillery.

François de Vengé, ditto.

Francesco Martellari, lieutenant of Artillery.

Francesco Froio, lieutenant in the 3rd regiment of the line.

Giovanni della Camera, Public Prosecutor to the Criminal Courts of Lower Calabria.

Francesco Papavassi, registrar.

The commission assembled that night.

On the 13th October, at six o'clock in the morning, Captain Stratti came into the king's prison; he was sound asleep. Stratti was going away again, when he stumbled against a chair; the noise awoke Murat.

"What do you want with me, captain?" asked the king.

Stratti tried to speak, but his voice failed him.

"Ah ha!" said Murat, "you must have had news from Naples."

"Yes, sire," muttered Stratti.

"What are they?" said Murat.

"Your trial, sire."

"And by whose order will sentence be pronounced, if you please? Where will they find peers to judge me? If they consider me as a king, I must have a tribunal of kings; if I am a marshal of France, I must have a court of marshals; if I am a general, and that is the least I can be, I must have a jury of generals."

"Sire, you are declared a public enemy, and as such you are liable to be judged by court-martial: it is the law which you instituted yourself for rebels."

"That law was made for brigands, and not for crowned heads, sir," said Murat scornfully. "I am ready; let them butcher me if they like. I did not think King Ferdinand capable of such an action."

"Sire, will you not hear the names of your judges?"

"Yes, sir, I will. It must be a curious list. Read it: I am listening."

Captain Stratti read out the names that we have enumerated. Murat listened with a disdainful smile.

"Ah," he said, as the captain finished, "it seems that every precaution has been taken."

"How, sire?"

"Yes. Don't you know that all these men, with the exception of Francesco Froio, the reporter, owe their promotion to me? They will be afraid of being accused of sparing me out of gratitude, and save one voice, perhaps, the sentence will be unanimous."

"Sire, suppose you were to appear before the court, to plead your own cause?"

"Silence, sir, silence!" said Murat. "I could not officially recognise the judges you have named without tearing too many pages of history. Such a tribunal is quite incompetent; I should be disgraced if I appeared before it. I know I could not save my life, let me at least preserve my royal dignity."

At this moment Lieutenant Francesco Froio came in to interrogate the prisoner, asking his name, his age, and his nationality. Hearing these questions, Murat rose with an expression of sublime dignity.

"I am Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies," he answered, "and I order you to leave me."

The registrar obeyed.

Then Murat partially dressed himself, and asked Stratti if he could write a farewell to his wife and children. The Captain no longer able to speak, answered by an affirmative sign; then Joachim sat down to the table and wrote this letter:—

[1] "DEAR CAROLINE OF MY HEART,—The fatal moment has come: I am to suffer the death penalty. In an hour you will be a widow, our children will be fatherless: remember me; never forget my memory. I die innocent; my life is taken from me unjustly.

"Good-bye, Achille; good-bye, Laetitia; good-bye, Lucien; good-bye, Louise.

"Show yourselves worthy of me; I leave you in a world and in a kingdom full of my enemies. Show yourselves superior to adversity, and remember never to think yourselves better than you are, remembering what you have been.

"Farewell. I bless you all. Never curse my memory. Remember that the worst pang of my agony is in dying far from my children, far from my wife, without a friend to close my eyes. Farewell, my own Caroline. Farewell, my children.

[1] We can guarantee the authenticity of this letter, having copied it ourselves at Pizzo, from the Cavaliere Alcala's copy of the original.

I send you my blessing, my most tender tears, my last kisses. Farewell, farewell. Never forget your unhappy father,

"JOACHIM MURAT

"PIZZO, *Oct.* 13, 1815"

Then he cut off a lock of his hair and put it in his letter. Just then General Nunziante came in; Murat went to him and held out his hand.

"General," he said, "you are a father, you are a husband, one day you will know what it is to part from your wife and sons. Swear to me that this letter shall be delivered."

"On my epaulettes," said the general,[1] wiping his eyes.

"Come, come, courage, general," said Murat; "we are soldiers, we know how to face death. One favour—you will let me give the order to fire, will you not?"

The general signed acquiescence: just then the registrar came in with the king's sentence in his hand.

Murat guessed what it was.

"Read, sir," he said coldly; "I am listening."

The registrar obeyed. Murat was right.

The sentence of death had been carried with only one dissentient voice.

When the reading was finished, the king turned again to Nunziante.

"General," he said, "believe that I distinguish in my mind the instrument which strikes me and the hand that wields that instrument. I should never have thought that Ferdinand would have had me shot like a dog; he does not hesitate apparently before such infamy. Very well. We will say no more about it. I have challenged my judges, but not my executioners. What time have you fixed for my execution?"

"Will you fix it yourself, sire?" said the general.

Murat pulled out a watch on which there was a portrait of his wife; by chance he turned up the portrait, and not the face of the watch; he gazed at it tenderly.

"See, general," he said, showing it to Nunziante; "it

[1] Madame Murat never received this letter.

is a portrait of the queen. You know her; is it not like her?"

The general turned away his head. Murat sighed and put away the watch.

"Well, sire," said the registrar, "what time have you fixed?"

"Ah yes," said Murat, smiling, "I forgot why I took out my watch when I saw Caroline's portrait."

Then he looked at his watch again, but this time at its face.

"Well, it shall be at four o'clock, if you like; it is past three o'clock. I ask for fifty minutes. Is that too much, sir?"

The registrar bowed and went out. The general was about to follow him.

"Shall I never see you again, Nunziante?" said Murat.

"My orders are to be present at your death, sire, but I cannot do it."

"Very well, general. I will dispense with your presence at the last moment, but I should like to say farewell once more and to embrace you."

"I will be near, sire."

"Thank you. Now leave me alone."

"Sire, there are two priests here."

Murat made an impatient movement.

"Will you receive them?" continued the general.

"Yes; bring them in."

The general went out. A moment later, two priests appeared in the doorway. One of them was called Francesco Pellegrino, uncle of the man who had caused the king's death; the other was Don Antonio Masdea.

"What do you want here?" asked Murat.

"We come to ask you if you are dying a Christian?"

"I am dying as a soldier. Leave me."

Don Francesco Pellegrino retired. No doubt he felt ill at ease before Joachim. But Antonio Masdea remained at the door.

"Did you not hear me?" asked the king.

"Yes, indeed," answered the old man; "but permit me, sire, to hope that it was not your last word to me. It is not the

first time that I see you or beg something of you. I have already had occasion to ask a favour of you."

"What was that?"

"When your Majesty came to Pizzo in 1810, I asked you for 25,000 francs to enable us to finish our church. Your Majesty sent me 40,000 francs."

"I must have foreseen that I should be buried there," said Murat, smiling.

"Ah, sire, I should like to think that you did not refuse my second boon any more than my first. Sire, I entreat you on my knees."

The old man fell at Murat's feet.

"Die as a Christian!"

"That would give you pleasure, then, would it?" said the king.

"Sire, I would give the few short days remaining to me if God would grant that His Holy Spirit should fall upon you in your last hour."

"Well," said Murat, "hear my confession. I accuse myself of having been disobedient to my parents as a child. Since I reached manhood I have done nothing to reproach myself with."

"Sire, will you give me an attestation that you die in the Christian faith?"

"Certainly," said Murat.

And he took a pen and wrote: "I, Joachim Murat, die a Christian, believing in the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman."

He signed it.

"Now, father," continued the king, "if you have a third favour to ask of me, make haste, for in half an hour it will be too late."

Indeed, the castle clock was striking half-past three. The priest signed that he had finished.

"Then leave me alone," said Murat; and the old man went out.

Murat paced his room for a few moments, then he sat down

on his bed and let his head fall into his hands. Doubtless, during the quarter of an hour he remained thus absorbed in his thoughts, he saw his whole life pass before him, from the inn where he had started to the palace he had reached; no doubt his adventurous career unrolled itself before him like some golden dream, some brilliant fiction, some tale from the *Arabian Nights.*

His life had gleamed athwart the storm like a rainbow, and like a rainbow's, its two extremities were lost in clouds—the clouds of birth and death. At last he roused himself from this inward contemplation, and lifted a pale but tranquil face. Then he went to the glass and arranged his hair. His strange characteristics never left him. The affianced of Death, he was adorning himself to meet his bride.

Four o'clock struck.

Murat went to the door himself and opened it.

General Nunziante was waiting for him.

"Thank you, general," said Murat. "You have kept your word. Kiss me, and go at once, if you like."

The general threw himself into the king's arms, weeping, and utterly unable to speak.

"Courage," said Murat. "You see *I* am calm." It was this very calmness which broke the general's heart. He dashed out of the corridor, and left the castle, running like a madman.

Then the king walked out into the courtyard.

Everything was ready for the execution.

Nine men and a corporal were ranged before the door of the council chamber. Opposite them was a wall twelve feet high. Three feet away from the wall was a stone block: Murat mounted it, thus raising himself about a foot above the soldiers who were to execute him. Then he took out his watch, kissed his wife's portrait, and fixing his eyes on it, gave the order to fire. At the word of command five out of the nine men fired: Murat remained standing. The soldiers had been ashamed to fire on their king, and had aimed over his head. That moment perhaps displayed most gloriously the lion-like courage which was Murat's special attribute. His face never changed, he

did not move a muscle; only gazing at the soldiers with an expression of mingled bitterness and gratitude, he said—

"Thank you, my friends. Since sooner or later you will be obliged to aim true, do not prolong my death-agonies. All I ask you is to aim at the heart and spare the face. Now——"

With the same voice, the same calm, the same expression, he repeated the fatal words one after another, without lagging, without hastening, as if he were giving an accustomed command; but this time, happier than the first, at the word "Fire!" he fell pierced by eight bullets, without a sigh, without a movement, still holding the watch[1] in his left hand.

The soldiers took up the body and laid it on the bed where ten minutes before he had been sitting, and the captain put a guard at the door.

In the evening a man presented himself, asking to go into the death-chamber: the sentinel refused to let him in, and he demanded an interview with the governor of the prison. Led before him, he produced an order. The commander read it with surprise and disgust, but after reading it he led the man to the door where he had been refused entrance.

"Pass the Signor Luidgi," he said to the sentinel.

Ten minutes had hardly elapsed before he came out again, holding a bloodstained handkerchief containing something to which the sentinel could not give a name.

An hour later, the carpenter brought the coffin which was to contain the king's remains. The workman entered the room, but instantly called the sentinel in a voice of indescribable terror.

The sentinel half opened the door to see what had caused the man's panic.

The carpenter pointed to a headless corpse!

At the death of King Ferdinand, that head, preserved in spirits of wine, was found in a secret cupboard in his bedroom.

A week after the execution of Pizzo everyone had received his reward: Trenta Capelli was made a colonel, General Nunziante a marquis, and Luidgi died from the effects of poison.

[1] Madame Murat recovered this watch at the price of 200 louis.

KARL-LUDWIG SAND

KARL-LUDWIG SAND

1819

ON the 22nd of March 1819, about nine o'clock in the morning, a young man, some twenty-three or twenty-four years old, wearing the dress of a German student, which consists of a short frock-coat with silk braiding, tight trousers, and high boots, paused upon a little eminence that stands upon the road between Kaiserthal and Mannheim, at about three-quarters of the distance from the former town, and commands a view of the latter. Mannheim is seen rising calm and smiling amid gardens which once were ramparts, and which now surround and embrace it like a girdle of foliage and flowers. Having reached this spot, he lifted his cap, above the peak of which were embroidered three interlaced oak leaves in silver, and uncovering his brow, stood bareheaded for a moment to feel the fresh air that rose from the valley of the Neckar. At first sight his irregular features produced a strange impression; but before long the pallor of his face, deeply marked by smallpox, the infinite gentleness of his eyes, and the elegant framework of his long and flowing black hair, which grew in an admirable curve around a broad, high forehead, attracted towards him that emotion of sad sympathy to which we yield without inquiring its reason or dreaming of resistance. Though it was still early, he seemed already to have come some distance, for his boots were covered with dust; but no doubt he was nearing his destination, for, letting his cap drop, and hooking into his belt his long pipe, that inseparable companion of the German *Bursch*, he drew from his pocket a little note-book, and wrote in it with a pencil: "Left Wanheim at five in the morning,

came in sight of Mannheim at a quarter-past nine." Then putting his note-book back into his pocket, he stood motionless for a moment, his lips moving as though in mental prayer, picked up his hat, and walked on again with a firm step towards Mannheim.

This young student was Karl-Ludwig Sand, who was coming from Jena, by way of Frankfort and Darmstadt, in order to assassinate Kotzebue.

Now, as we are about to set before our readers one of those terrible actions for the true appreciation of which the conscience is the sole judge, they must allow us to make them fully acquainted with him whom kings regarded as an assassin, judges as a fanatic, and the youth of Germany as a hero. Charles Louis Sand was born on the 5th of October 1795 at Wonsiedel, in the Fichtel Wald; he was the youngest son of Godfrey Christopher Sand, first president and councillor of justice to the King of Prussia, and of Dorothea Jane Wilhelmina Schapf, his wife. Besides two elder brothers, George, who entered upon a commercial career at St. Gall, and Fritz, who was an advocate in the Berlin court of appeal, he had an elder sister named Caroline, and a younger sister called Julia.

While still in the cradle he had been attacked by smallpox of the most malignant type. The virus having spread through all his body, laid bare his ribs, and almost ate away his skull. For several months he lay between life and death; but life at last gained the upper hand. He remained weak and sickly, however, up to his seventh year, at which time a brain fever attacked him, and again put his life in danger. As a compensation, however, this fever, when it left him, seemed to carry away with it all vestiges of his former illness. From that moment his health and strength came into existence; but during these two long illnesses his education had remained very backward, and it was not until the age of eight that he could begin his elementary studies; moreover, his physical sufferings having retarded his intellectual development, he needed to work twice as hard as others to reach the same result.

Seeing the efforts that young Sand made, even while still

quite a child, to conquer the defects of his organisation, Professor Salfranck, a learned and distinguished man, rector of the Hof gymnasium,[1] conceived such an affection for him, that when, at a later time, he was appointed director of the gymnasium at Ratisbon, he could not part from his pupil, and took him with him. In this town, and at the age of eleven years, he gave the first proof of his courage and humanity. One day, when he was walking with some young friends, he heard cries for help, and ran in that direction: a little boy, eight or nine years old, had just fallen into a pond. Sand immediately, without regarding his best clothes, of which, however, he was very proud, sprang into the water, and, after unheard-of efforts for a child of his age, succeeded in bringing the drowning boy to land.

At the age of twelve or thirteen, Sand, who had become more active, skilful, and determined than many of his elders, often amused himself by giving battle to the lads of the town and of the neighbouring villages. The theatre of these childish conflicts, which in their pale innocence reflected the great battles that were at that time steeping Germany in blood, was generally a plain extending from the town of Wonsiedel to the mountain of St. Catherine, which had ruins at its top, and amid the ruins a tower in excellent preservation. Sand, who was one of the most eager fighters, seeing that his side had several times been defeated on account of its numerical inferiority, resolved, in order to make up for this drawback, to fortify the tower of St. Catherine, and to retire into it at the next battle, if its issue proved unfavourable to him. He communicated this plan to his companions, who received it with enthusiasm. A week was spent, accordingly, in collecting all possible weapons of defence in the tower and in repairing its doors and stairs. These preparations were made so secretly that the army of the enemy had no knowledge of them.

Sunday came: the holidays were the days of battle. Whether because the boys were ashamed of having been beaten last time, or for some other reason, the band to which Sand belonged was

[1] Translator's note.—"Gymnasium" in German means "college."

even weaker than usual. Sure, however, of a means of retreat, he accepted battle, notwithstanding. The struggle was not a long one; the one party was too weak in numbers to make a prolonged resistance, and began to retire in the best order that could be maintained to St. Catherine's tower, which was reached before much damage had been felt. Having arrived there, some of the combatants ascended to the ramparts, and while the others defended themselves at the foot of the wall, began to shower stones and pebbles upon the conquerors. The latter, surprised at the new method of defence which was now for the first time adopted, retreated a little; the rest of the defenders took advantage of the moment to retire into the fortress and shut the door. Great was the astonishment on the part of the besiegers: they had always seen that door broken down, and lo! all at once it was presenting to them a barrier which preserved the besieged from their blows. Three or four went off to find instruments with which to break it down, and meanwhile the rest of the attacking force kept the garrison blockaded.

At the end of half an hour the messengers returned, not only with levers and picks, but also with a considerable reinforcement composed of lads from the village to which they had been to fetch tools. Then began the assault: Sand and his companions defended themselves desperately; but it was soon evident that, unless help came, the garrison would be forced to capitulate. It was proposed that they should draw lots, and that one of the besieged should be chosen, who in spite of the danger should leave the tower, make his way as best he might through the enemy's army, and go to summon the other lads of Wonsiedel, who had faint-heartedly remained at home. The tale of the peril in which their comrades actually were, the disgrace of a surrender, which would fall upon all of them, would no doubt overcome their indolence and induce them to make a diversion that would allow the garrison to attempt a sortie. This suggestion was adopted; but instead of leaving the decision to chance, Sand proposed himself as the messenger. As everybody knew his courage, his skill, and his lightness of foot, the proposition

was unanimously accepted, and the new Decius prepared to execute his act of devotion. The deed was not free from danger: there were but two means of egress, one by way of the door, which would lead to the fugitive's falling immediately into the hands of the enemy; the other by jumping from a rampart so high that the enemy had not set a guard there. Sand without a moment's hesitation went to the rampart, where, always religious, even in his childish pleasures, he made a short prayer; then, without fear, without hesitation, with a confidence that was almost superhuman, he sprang to the ground: the distance was twenty-two feet. Sand flew instantly to Wonsiedel, and reached it, although the enemy had despatched their best runners in pursuit. Then the garrison, seeing the success of their enterprise, took fresh courage, and united their efforts against the besiegers, hoping everything from Sand's eloquence, which gave him a great influence over his young companions. And, indeed, in half an hour he was seen reappearing at the head of some thirty boys of his own age, armed with slings and crossbows. The besiegers, on the point of being attacked before and behind, recognised the disadvantage of their position and retreated. The victory remained with Sand's party, and all the honours of the day were his.

We have related this anecdote in detail, that our readers may understand from the character of the child what was that of the man. Besides, we shall see him develop, always calm and superior amid small events as amid large ones.

About the same time Sand escaped almost miraculously from two dangers. One day a hod full of plaster fell from a scaffold and broke at his feet. Another day the Prince of Coburg, who during the King of Prussia's stay at the baths of Alexander, was living in the house of Sand's parents, was galloping home with four horses when he came suddenly upon young Karl in a gateway; he could not escape either on the right or the left, without running the risk of being crushed between the wall and the wheels, and the coachman could not, when going at such a pace, hold in his horses: Sand flung himself on his face, and the carriage passed over him without his receiving so much as

a single scratch either from the horses or the wheels. From that moment many people regarded him as predestined, and said that the hand of God was upon him.

Meanwhile political events were developing themselves around the boy, and their seriousness made him a man before the age of manhood. Napoleon weighed upon Germany like another Sennacherib. Staps had tried to play the part of Mutius Scævola, and had died a martyr. Sand was at Hof at that time, and was a student of the gymnasium of which his good tutor Salfranck was the head. He learned that the man whom he regarded as the antichrist was to come and review the troops in that town; he left it at once and went home to his parents, who asked him for what reason he had left the gymnasium.

"Because I could not have been in the same town with Napoleon," he answered, "without trying to kill him, and I do not feel my hand strong enough for that yet."

This happened in 1809; Sand was fourteen years old. Peace, which was signed on the 15th of October, gave Germany some respite, and allowed the young fanatic to resume his studies without being distracted by political considerations; but in 1811 he was occupied by them again, when he learned that the gymnasium was to be dissolved and its place taken by a primary school. To this the rector Salfranck was appointed as a teacher, but instead of the thousand florins which his former appointment brought him, the new one was worth only five hundred. Karl could not remain in a primary school where he could not continue his education; he wrote to his mother to announce this event and to tell her with what equanimity the old German philosopher had borne it. Here is the answer of Sand's mother; it will serve to show the character of the woman whose mighty heart never belied itself in the midst of the severest suffering; the answer bears the stamp of that German mysticism of which we have no idea in France:—

"My dear Karl,—You could not have given me a more grievous piece of news than that of the event which has just

fallen upon your tutor and father by adoption; nevertheless, terrible though it may be, do not doubt that he will resign himself to it, in order to give to the virtue of his pupils a great example of that submission which every subject owes to the king whom God has set over him. Furthermore, be well assured that in this world there is no other upright and well calculated policy than that which grows out of the old precept, 'Honour God, be just and fear not.' And reflect also that when injustice against the worthy becomes crying, the public voice makes itself heard, and uplifts those who are cast down.

"But if, contrary to all probability, this did not happen,—if God should impose this sublime probation upon the virtue of our friend, if the world were to disown him and Providence were to become to that degree his debtor,—yet in that case there are, believe me, supreme compensations: all the things and all the events that occur around us and that act upon us are but machines set in motion by a Higher Hand, so as to complete our education for a higher world, in which alone we shall take our true place. Apply yourself, therefore, my dear child, to watch over yourself unceasingly and always, so that you may not take great and fine isolated actions for real virtue, and may be ready every moment to do all that your duty may require of you. Fundamentally nothing is great, you see, and nothing small, when things are looked at apart from one another, and it is only the putting of things together that produces the unity of evil or of good.

"Moreover, God only sends the trial to the heart where He has put strength, and the manner in which you tell me that your master has borne the misfortune that has befallen him is a fresh proof of this great and eternal truth. You must form yourself upon him, my dear child, and if you are obliged to leave Hof for Bamberg you must resign yourself to it courageously. Man has three educations: that which he receives from his parents, that which circumstances impose upon him, and lastly that which he gives himself; if that misfortune should occur, pray to God that you may yourself worthily complete that last education, the most important of all.

"I will give you as an example the life and conduct of my father, of whom you have not heard very much, for he died before you were born, but whose mind and likeness are reproduced in you only among all your brothers and sisters. The disastrous fire which reduced his native town to ashes destroyed his fortune and that of his relatives; grief at having lost everything—for the fire broke out in the next house to his—cost his father his life; and while his mother, who for six years had been stretched on a bed of pain where horrible convulsions held her fast, supported her three little girls by the needlework that she did in the intervals of suffering, he went as a mere clerk into one of the leading mercantile houses of Augsburg, where his lively and yet even temper made him welcome; there he learned a calling, for which, however, he was not naturally adapted, and came back to the home of his birth with a pure and stainless heart, in order to be the support of his mother and his sisters.

"A man can do much when he wishes to do much: join your efforts to my prayers, and leave the rest in the hands of God."

The prediction of this Puritan woman was fulfilled: a little time afterwards rector Salfranck was appointed professor at Richembourg, whither Sand followed him; it was there that the events of 1813 found him. In the month of March he wrote to his mother:—

"I can scarcely, dear mother, express to you how calm and happy I begin to feel since I am permitted to believe in the enfranchisement of my country, of which I hear on every side as being so near at hand,—of that country which, in my faith in God, I see beforehand free and mighty, that country for whose happiness I would undergo the greatest sufferings, and even death. Take strength for this crisis. If by chance it should reach our good province, lift your eyes to the Almighty, then carry them back to beautiful rich nature. The goodness of God which preserved and protected so many men

during the disastrous Thirty Years' War can do and will do now what it could and did then. As for me, I believe and hope."

Leipzig came to justify Sand's presentiments; then the year 1814 arrived, and he thought Germany free.

On the 10th of December in the same year he left Richembourg with this certificate from his masters:—

"Karl Sand belongs to the small number of those elect young men who are distinguished at once by the gifts of the mind and the faculties of the soul; in application and work he surpasses all his fellow-students, and this fact explains his rapid progress in all the philosophical and philological sciences; in mathematics only there are still some further studies which he might pursue. The most affectionate wishes of his teacher follow him on his departure. J. A. KEYN

"*Rector, and master of the first class*

"RICHEMBOURG, *Sept.* 15, 1814"

But it was really the parents of Sand, and in particular his mother, who had prepared the fertile soil in which his teachers had sowed the seeds of learning; Sand knew this well, for at the moment of setting out for the university of Tubingen, where he was about to complete the theological studies necessary for becoming a pastor, as he desired to do, he wrote to them:—

"I confess that, like all my brothers and sisters, I owe to you that beautiful and great part of my education which I have seen to be lacking to most of those around me. Heaven alone can reward you by a conviction of having so nobly and grandly fulfilled your parental duties, amid many others."

After having paid a visit to his brother at St. Gall, Sand reached Tubingen, to which he had been principally attracted by the reputation of Eschenmayer; he spent that winter quietly, and no other incident befell than his admission into an associa-

tion of *Burschen*, called the *Teutonia*; then came Easter of 1815, and with it the terrible news that Napoleon had landed in the Gulf of Juan. Immediately all the youth of Germany able to bear arms gathered once more around the banners of 1813 and 1814. Sand followed the general example; but the action, which in others was an effect of enthusiasm, was in him the result of calm and deliberate resolution. He wrote to Wonsiedel on this occasion:—

"*April* 22, 1813

"My dear Parents,—Until now you have found me submissive to your parental lessons and to the advice of my excellent masters; until now I have made efforts to render myself worthy of the education that God has sent me through you, and have applied myself to become capable of spreading the word of the Lord through my native land; and for this reason I can to-day declare to you sincerely the decision that I have taken, assured that as tender and affectionate parents you will calm yourselves, and as German parents and patriots you will rather praise my resolution than seek to turn me from it.

"The country calls once more for help, and this time the call is addressed to me too, for now I have courage and strength. It cost me a great inward struggle, believe me, to abstain when in 1813 she gave her first cry, and only the conviction held me back that thousands of others were then fighting and conquering for Germany, while I had to live for the peaceful calling to which I was destined. Now it is a question of preserving our newly re-established liberty, which in so many places has already brought in so rich a harvest. The all-powerful and merciful Lord reserves for us this great trial, which will certainly be the last; it is for us, therefore, to show that we are worthy of the supreme gift which He has given us, and capable of upholding it with strength and firmness.

"The danger of the country has never been so great as it is now, that is why, among the youth of Germany, the strong should support the wavering, that all may rise together. Our brave brothers in the north are already assembling from all parts under their banners; the State of Wurtemburg is pro-

claiming a general levy, and volunteers are coming in from every quarter, asking to die for their country. I consider it my duty, too, to fight for my country and for all the dear ones whom I love. If I were not profoundly convinced of this truth, I should not communicate my resolution to you; but my family is one that has a really German heart, and that would consider me as a coward and an unworthy son if I did not follow this impulse. I certainly feel the greatness of the sacrifice; it costs me something, believe me, to leave my beautiful studies and go to put myself under the orders of vulgar, uneducated people, but this only increases my courage in going to secure the liberty of my brothers; moreover, when once that liberty is secured, if God deigns to allow, I will return to carry them His word.

"I take leave, therefore, for a time of you, my most worthy parents, of my brothers, my sisters, and all who are dear to me. As, after mature deliberation, it seems the most suitable thing for me to serve with the Bavarians, I shall get myself enrolled, for as long as the war may last, with a company of that nation. Farewell, then; live happily; far away from you as I shall be, I shall follow your pious exhortations. In this new track I shall still, I hope, remain pure before God, and I shall always try to walk in the path that rises above the things of earth and leads to those of heaven, and perhaps in this career the bliss of saving some souls from their fall may be reserved for me.

"Your dear image will always be about me; I will always have the Lord before my eyes and in my heart, so that I may endure joyfully the pains and fatigues of this holy war. Include me in your prayers; God will send you the hope of better times to help you in bearing the unhappy time in which we now are. We cannot see one another again soon, unless we conquer; and if we should be conquered (which God forbid!), then my last wish, which I pray you, I conjure you, to fulfil, my last and supreme wish would be that you, my dear and deserving German relatives, should leave an enslaved country for some other not yet under the yoke.

"But why should we thus sadden one another's hearts? Is

not our cause just and holy, and is not God just and holy? How then should we not be victors? You see that sometimes I doubt, so, in your letters, which I am impatiently expecting, have pity on me and do not alarm my soul, for in any case we shall meet again in another country, and that one will always be free and happy.

"I am, until death, your dutiful and grateful son,

"KARL SAND"

These two lines of Körner's were written as a postscript:—

"Perchance above our foemen lying dead
We may behold the star of liberty."

With this farewell to his parents, and with Körner's poems on his lips, Sand gave up his books, and on the 10th of May we find him in arms among the volunteer chasseurs enrolled under the command of Major Falkenhausen, who was at that time at Mannheim; here he found his second brother, who had preceded him, and they underwent all their drill together.

Though Sand was not accustomed to great bodily fatigues, he endured those of the campaign with surprising strength, refusing all the alleviations that his superiors tried to offer him; for he would allow no one to outdo him in the trouble that he took for the good of the country. On the march he invariably shared anything that he possessed fraternally with his comrades, helping those who were weaker than himself to carry their burdens, and, at once priest and soldier, sustaining them by his words when he was powerless to do anything more.

On the 18th of June, at eight o'clock in the evening, he arrived upon the field of battle at Waterloo. On the 14th of July he entered Paris.

On the 18th of December 1815, Karl Sand and his brother were back at Wonsiedel, to the great joy of their family. He spent the Christmas holidays and the end of the year with them, but his ardour for his new vocation did not allow him to remain longer, and on the 7th of January he reached Erlangen. Then, to make up for lost time, he resolved to subject his day to fixed

and uniform rules, and to write down every evening what he had done since the morning. It is by the help of this journal that we are able to follow the young enthusiast, not only in all the actions of his life, but also in all the thoughts of his mind and all the hesitations of his conscience. In it we find his whole self, simple to naïveté, enthusiastic to madness, gentle even to weakness towards others, severe even to asceticism towards himself. One of his great griefs was the expense that his education occasioned to his parents, and every useless and costly pleasure left a remorse in his heart. Thus, on the 9th of February 1816, he wrote:—

"I meant to go and visit my parents. Accordingly I went to the *Commers-haus*, and there I was much amused. N. and T. began upon me with the everlasting jokes about Wonsiedel; that went on until eleven o'clock. But afterwards N. and T. began to torment me to go to the wine-shop; I refused as long as I could. But as, at last, they seemed to think that it was from contempt of them that I would not go and drink a glass of Rhine wine with them, I did not dare resist longer. Unfortunately, they did not stop at Braunberger; and while my glass was still half full, N. ordered a bottle of champagne. When the first had disappeared, T. ordered a second; then, even before this second bottle was drunk, both of them ordered a third in my name and in spite of me. I returned home quite giddy, and threw myself on the sofa, where I slept for about an hour, and only went to bed afterwards.

"Thus passed this shameful day, in which I have not thought enough of my kind and worthy parents, who are leading a poor and hard life, and in which I suffered myself to be led away by the example of people who have money into spending four florins—an expenditure which was useless, and which would have kept the whole family for two days. Pardon me, my God, pardon me, I beseech Thee, and receive the vow that I make never to fall into the same fault again. In future I will live even more abstemiously than I usually do, so as to repair the fatal traces in my poor cash-box of my extravagance, and not to be

obliged to ask money of my mother before the day when she thinks of sending me some herself."

Then, at the very time when the poor young man reproaches himself as if with a crime with having spent four florins, one of his cousins, a widow, dies and leaves three orphan children. He runs immediately to carry the first consolations to the unhappy little creatures, entreats his mother to take charge of the youngest, and overjoyed at her answer, thanks her thus:—

"For the very keen joy that you have given me by your letter, and for the very dear tone in which your soul speaks to me, bless you, O my mother! As I might have hoped and been sure, you have taken little Julius, and that fills me afresh with the deepest gratitude towards you, the rather that, in my constant trust in your goodness, I had already in her lifetime given our good little cousin the promise that you are fulfilling for me after her death."

About March, Sand, though he did not fall ill, had an indisposition that obliged him to go and take the waters; his mother happened at the time to be at the ironworks of Redwitz, some twelve or fifteen miles from Wonsiedel, where the mineral springs are found. Sand established himself there with his mother, and notwithstanding his desire to avoid interrupting his work, the time taken up by baths, by invitations to dinners, and even by the walks which his health required, disturbed the regularity of his usual existence and awakened his remorse. Thus we find these lines written in his journal for April 13th:—

"Life, without some high aim towards which all thoughts and actions tend, is an empty desert: my day yesterday is a proof of this; I spent it with my own people, and that, of course, was a great pleasure to me; but how did I spend it? In continual eating, so that when I wanted to work I could do nothing worth doing. Full of indolence and slackness, I dragged myself into the company of two or three sets of people, and

came from them in the same state of mind as I went to them."

For these expeditions Sand made use of a little chestnut horse which belonged to his brother, and of which he was very fond. This little horse had been bought with great difficulty; for, as we have said, the whole family was poor. The following note, in relation to the animal, will give an idea of Sand's simplicity of heart:—

"19*th April*

"To-day I have been very happy at the ironworks, and very industrious beside my kind mother. In the evening I came home on the little chestnut. Since the day before yesterday, when he got a strain and hurt his foot, he has been very restive and very touchy, and when he got home he refused his food. I thought at first that he did not fancy his fodder, and gave him some pieces of sugar and sticks of cinnamon, which he likes very much; he tasted them, but would not eat them. The poor little beast seems to have some other internal indisposition besides his injured foot. If by ill luck he were to become foundered or ill, everybody, even my parents, would throw the blame on me, and yet I have been very careful and considerate of him. My God, my Lord, Thou who canst do things both great and small, remove from me this misfortune, and let him recover as quickly as possible. If, however, Thou hast willed otherwise, and if this fresh trouble is to fall upon us, I will try to bear it with courage, and as the expiation of some sin. Meanwhile, O my God, I leave this matter in Thy hands, as I leave my life and my soul."

On the 20th of April he wrote:—

"The little horse is well; God has helped me."

German manners and customs are so different from ours, and contrasts occur so frequently in the same man, on the other side of the Rhine, that anything less than all the quotations which we have given would have been insufficient to place before our readers a true idea of that character made up of

artlessness and reason, childishness and strength, depression and enthusiasm, material details and poetic ideas, which renders Sand a man incomprehensible to us. We will now continue the portrait, which still wants a few finishing touches.

When he returned to Erlangen, after the completion of his "cure," Sand read *Faust* for the first time. At first he was amazed at that work, which seemed to him an orgy of genius; then, when he had entirely finished it, he reconsidered his first impression, and wrote:—

"*4th May.*

"Oh, horrible struggle of man and devil! What Mephistopheles is in me I feel for the first time in this hour, and I feel it, O God, with consternation!

"About eleven at night I finished reading the tragedy, and I felt and saw the fiend in myself, so that by midnight, amid my tears and despair, I was at last frightened at myself."

Sand was falling by degrees into a deep melancholy, from which nothing could rouse him except his desire to purify and preach morality to the students around him. To anyone who knows university life such a task will seem superhuman. Sand, however, was not discouraged, and if he could not gain an influence over everyone, he at least succeeded in forming around him a considerable circle of the most intelligent and the best; nevertheless, in the midst of these apostolic labours strange longings for death would overcome him; he seemed to recall heaven and want to return to it; he called these temptations "homesickness for the soul's country."

His favourite authors were Lessing, Schiller, Herder, and Goethe; after re-reading the two last for the twentieth time, this is what he wrote:—

"Good and evil touch each other; the woes of the young Werther and Weisslingen's seduction are almost the same story; no matter, we must not judge between what is good and what is evil in others; for that is what God will do. I have just been spending much time over this thought, and have

become convinced that in no circumstances ought we to allow ourselves to seek for the devil in others, and that we have no right to judge; the only creature over whom we have received the power to judge and condemn is ourself, and that gives us enough constant care, business, and trouble.

"I have again to-day felt a profound desire to quit this world and enter a higher world; but this desire is rather dejection than strength, a lassitude than an upsoaring."

The year 1816 was spent by Sand in these pious attempts upon his young comrades, in this ceaseless self-examination, and in the perpetual battle which he waged with the desire for death that pursued him; every day he had deeper doubts of himself, and on the 1st of January 1817 he wrote this prayer in his diary:—

"Grant to me, O Lord, to me whom Thou hast endowed, in sending me on earth, with free will, the grace that in this year which we are now beginning I may never relax this constant attention, and not shamefully give up the examination of my conscience which I have hitherto made. Give me strength to increase the attention which I turn upon my own life, and to diminish that which I turn upon the life of others; strengthen my will that it may become powerful to command the desires of the body and the waverings of the soul; give me a pious conscience entirely devoted to Thy celestial kingdom, that I may always belong to Thee, or after failing, may be able to return to Thee."

Sand was right in praying to God for the year 1817, and his fears were a presentiment: the skies of Germany, lightened by Leipzig and Waterloo, were once more darkened; to the colossal and universal despotism of Napoleon succeeded the individual oppression of those little princes who made up the Germanic Diet, and all that the nations had gained by overthrowing the giant was to be governed by dwarfs. This was the time when secret societies were organised throughout Germany; let us say a few words about them, for the history

that we are writing is not only that of individuals, but also that of nations, and every time that occasion presents itself we will give our little picture a wide horizon.

The secret societies of Germany, of which, without knowing them, we have all heard, seem, when we follow them up, like rivers, to originate in some sort of affiliation to those famous clubs of the *illuminés* and the freemasons which made so much stir in France at the close of the eighteenth century. At the time of the revolution of '89 these different philosophical, political, and religious sects enthusiastically accepted the republican doctrines, and the successes of our first generals have often been attributed to the secret efforts of the members. When Bonaparte, who was acquainted with these groups, and was even said to have belonged to them, exchanged his general's uniform for an emperor's cloak, all of them, considering him as a renegade and traitor, not only rose against him at home, but tried to raise enemies against him abroad; as they addressed themselves to noble and generous passions, they found a response, and princes to whom their results might be profitable seemed for a moment to encourage them. Among others, Prince Louis of Prussia was grandmaster of one of these societies.

The attempted murder by Staps, to which we have already referred, was one of the thunderclaps of the storm; but its morrow brought the peace of Vienna, and the degradation of Austria was the death-blow of the old Germanic organisation. These societies, which had received a mortal wound in 1806 and were now controlled by the French police, instead of continuing to meet in public, were forced to seek new members in the dark. In 1811 several agents of these societies were arrested in Berlin, but the Prussian authorities, following secret orders of Queen Louisa, actually protected them, so that they were easily able to deceive the French police about their intentions. About February 1815 the disasters of the French army revived the courage of these societies, for it was seen that God was helping their cause: the students in particular joined enthusiastically in the new attempts that were now begun; many colleges enrolled themselves almost entire, and chose

their principals and professors as captains; the poet Körner, killed on the 18th of October at Leipzig, was the hero of this campaign.

The triumph of this national movement, which twice carried the Prussian army—largely composed of volunteers—to Paris, was followed, when the treaties of 1815 and the new Germanic constitution were made known, by a terrible reaction in Germany. All these young men who, exiled by their princes, had risen in the name of liberty, soon perceived that they had been used as tools to establish European despotism; they wished to claim the promises that had been made, but the policy of Talleyrand and Metternich weighed on them, and repressing them at the first words that they uttered, compelled them to shelter their discontent and their hopes in the universities, which, enjoying a kind of constitution of their own, more easily escaped the investigations made by the spies of the Holy Alliance; but, repressed as they were, these societies continued nevertheless to exist, and kept up communications by means of travelling students, who, bearing verbal messages, traversed Germany under the pretence of botanising, and, passing from mountain to mountain, sowed broadcast those luminous and hopeful words of which peoples are always greedy and kings always fear.

We have seen that Sand, carried away by the general movement, had gone through the campaign of 1815 as a volunteer, although he was then only nineteen years old. On his return, he, like others, had found his golden hopes deceived, and it is from this period that we find his journal assuming the tone of mysticism and sadness which our readers must have remarked in it. He soon entered one of these associations, the *Teutonia*; and from that moment, regarding the great cause which he had taken up as a religious one, he attempted to make the conspirators worthy of their enterprise, and thus arose his attempts to inculcate moral doctrines, in which he succeeded with some, but failed with the majority. Sand had succeeded, however, in forming around him a certain circle of Puritans, composed of about sixty to eighty students, all belonging to the group

of the *Burschenschaft* which continued its political and religious course despite all the jeers of the opposing group—the *Landmanschaft*. One of his friends called Dittmar and he were pretty much the chiefs, and although no election had given them their authority, they exercised so much influence upon what was decided that in any particular case their fellow-adepts were sure spontaneously to obey any impulse that they might choose to impart. The meetings of the *Burschen* took place upon a little hill crowned by a ruined castle, which was situated at some distance from Erlangen, and which Sand and Dittmar had called the Ruttli, in memory of the spot where Walter Fürst, Melchthal, and Stauffacher had made their vow to deliver their country; there, under the pretence of students' games, while they built up a new house with the ruined fragments, they passed alternately from symbol to action and from action to symbol.

Meanwhile the association was making such advances throughout Germany that not only the princes and kings of the German confederation, but also the great European powers, began to be uneasy. France sent agents to bring home reports, Russia paid agents on the spot, and the persecutions that touched a professor and exasperated a whole university often arose from a note sent by the Cabinet of the Tuileries or of St. Petersburg.

It was amid the events that began thus that Sand, after commending himself to the protection of God, began the year 1817, in the sad mood in which we have just seen him, and in which he was kept rather by a disgust for things as they were than by a disgust for life. On the 8th of May, preyed upon by this melancholy, which he cannot conquer, and which comes from the disappointment of all his political hopes, he writes in his diary:—

"I still find it impossible to set seriously to work, and this idle temper, this humour of hypochondria which casts its black veil over everything in life, continues and grows in spite of the moral activity which I imposed on myself yesterday."

In the holidays, fearing to burden his parents with any additional expense, he will not go home, and prefers to make a walking tour with his friends. No doubt this tour, in addition to its recreative side, had a political aim. Be that as it may, Sand's diary, during the period of the journey, shows nothing but the names of the towns through which he passed. That we may have a notion of Sand's dutifulness to his parents, it should be said that he did not set out until he had obtained his mother's permission. On their return, Sand, Dittmar, and their friends the *Burschen*, found their Ruttli sacked by their enemies of the *Landmannschaft*; the house that they had built was demolished and its fragments dispersed. Sand took this event for an omen, and was greatly depressed by it.

"It seems to me, O my God!" he says in his journal, "that everything swims and turns around me. My soul grows darker and darker; my moral strength grows less instead of greater; I work and cannot achieve; walk towards my aim and do not reach it; exhaust myself, and do nothing great. The days of life flee one after another; cares and uneasiness increase; I see no haven anywhere for our sacred German cause. The end will be that we shall fall, for I myself waver. O Lord and Father! protect me, save me, and lead me to that land from which we are for ever driven back by the indifference of wavering spirits."

About this time a terrible event struck Sand to the heart: his friend Dittmar was drowned. This is what he wrote in his diary on the very morning of the occurrence:—

"Oh, almighty God! What is going to become of me? For the last fortnight I have been drawn into disorder, and have not been able to compel myself to look fixedly either backward or forward in my life, so that from the 4th of June up to the present hour my journal has remained empty. Yet every day I might have had occasion to praise Thee, O my God, but my soul is in anguish. Lord, do not turn from me; the more are the obstacles the more need is there of strength."

In the evening he added these few words to the lines that he had written in the morning:—

"Desolation, despair, and death over my friend, over my very deeply loved Dittmar."

This letter which he wrote to his family contains the account of the tragic event:—

"You know that when my best friends, A., C., and Z., were gone, I became particularly intimate with my well-beloved Dittmar of Anspach; Dittmar, that is to say a true and worthy German, an evangelical Christian, something more, in short, than a man! An angelic soul, always turned toward the good, serene, pious, and ready for action; he had come to live in a room next to mine in Professor Grunler's house; we loved each other, upheld each other in our efforts, and, well or ill, bore our good or evil fortune in common. On this last spring evening, after having worked in his room and having strengthened ourselves anew to resist all the torments of life and to advance towards the aim that we desired to attain, we went, about seven in the evening, to the baths of Redwitz. A very black storm was rising in the sky, but only as yet appeared on the horizon. E., who was with us, proposed to go home, but Dittmar persisted, saying that the canal was but a few steps away. God permitted that it should not be I who replied with these fatal words. So we went on. The sunset was splendid: I see it still; its violet clouds all fringed with gold, for I remember the smallest details of that evening.

"Dittmar went down first; he was the only one of us who knew how to swim; so he walked before us to show us the depth. The water was about up to our chests, and he, who preceded us, was up to his shoulders, when he warned us not to go farther, because he was ceasing to feel the bottom. He immediately gave up his footing and began to swim, but scarcely had he made ten strokes when, having reached the place where the river separates into two branches, he uttered a cry, and as he was trying to get a foothold, disappeared. We ran at once

to the bank, hoping to be able to help him more easily; but we had neither poles nor ropes within reach, and, as I have told you, neither of us could swim. Then we called for help with all our might. At that moment Dittmar reappeared, and by an unheard-of effort seized the end of a willow branch that was hanging over the water; but the branch was not strong enough to resist, and our friend sank again, as though he had been struck by apoplexy. Can you imagine the state in which we were, we his friends, bending over the river, our fixed and haggard eyes trying to pierce its depths? My God, my God! how was it we did not go mad?

"A great crowd, however, had run up at our cries. For two hours they sought for him with boats and drag-hooks; and at last they succeeded in drawing his body from the gulf. Yesterday we bore it solemnly to the field of rest.

"Thus with the end of this spring has begun the serious summer of my life. I greeted it in a grave and melancholy mood, and you behold me now, if not consoled, at least strengthened by religion, which, thanks to the merits of Christ, gives me the assurance of meeting my friend in heaven, from the heights of which he will inspire me with strength to support the trials of this life; and now I do not desire anything more except to know you free from all anxiety in regard to me."

Instead of serving to unite the two groups of students in a common grief, this accident, on the contrary, did but intensify their hatred of each other. Among the first persons who ran up at the cries of Sand and his companion was a member of the *Landmannschaft* who could swim, but instead of going to Dittmar's assistance he exclaimed, "It seems that we shall get rid of one of these dogs of *Burschen*; thank God!" Notwithstanding this manifestation of hatred, which, indeed, might be that of an individual and not of the whole body, the *Burschen* invited their enemies to be present at Dittmar's funeral. A brutal refusal, and a threat to disturb the ceremony by insults to the corpse, formed their sole reply. The *Burschen* then warned the authorities, who took suitable measures, and all

Dittmar's friends followed his coffin sword in hand. Beholding this calm but resolute demonstration, the *Landmannschaft* did not dare to carry out their threat, and contented themselves with insulting the procession by laughs and songs.

Sand wrote in his journal:—

"Dittmar is a great loss to all of us, and particularly to me; he gave me the overflow of his strength and life; he stopped, as it were, with an embankment, the part of my character that is irresolute and undecided. From him it is that I have learned not to dread the approaching storm, and to know how to fight and die."

Some days after the funeral Sand had a quarrel about Dittmar with one of his former friends, who had passed over from the *Burschen* to the *Landmannschaft*, and who had made himself conspicuous at the time of the funeral by his indecent hilarity. It was decided that they should fight the next day, and on the same day Sand wrote in his journal:—

"To-morrow I am to fight with P. G.; yet Thou knowest, O my God, what great friends we formerly were, except for a certain mistrust with which his coldness always inspired me; but on this occasion his odious conduct has caused me to descend from the tenderest pity to the profoundest hatred.

"My God, do not withdraw Thy hand either from him or from me, since we are both fighting like men! Judge only by our two causes, and give the victory to that which is the more just. If Thou shouldst call me before Thy supreme tribunal, I know very well that I should appear burdened with an eternal malediction; and indeed it is not upon myself that I reckon but upon the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Come what may, be praised and blessed, O my God!

"My dear parents, brothers, and friends, I commend you to the protection of God."

Sand waited in vain for two hours next day: his adversary did not come to the meeting-place.

The loss of Dittmar, however, by no means produced the

result upon Sand that might have been expected, and that he himself seems to indicate in the regrets he expressed for him. Deprived of that strong soul upon which he rested, Sand understood that it was his task by redoubled energy to make the death of Dittmar less fatal to his party. And indeed he continued singly the work of drawing in recruits which they had been carrying on together, and the patriotic conspiracy was not for a moment impeded.

The holidays came, and Sand left Erlangen to return no more. From Wonsiedel he was to proceed to Jena, in order to complete his theological studies there. After some days spent with his family, and indicated in his journal as happy, Sand went to his new place of abode, where he arrived some time before the festival of the Wartburg. This festival, established to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig, was regarded as a solemnity throughout Germany, and although the princes well knew that it was a centre for the annual renewal of affiliation to the various societies, they dared not forbid it. Indeed, the manifesto of the Teutonic Association was exhibited at this festival and signed by more than two thousand deputies from different universities of Germany. This was a day of joy for Sand; for he found in the midst of new friends a great number of old ones.

The Government, however, which had not dared to attack the Association by force, resolved to undermine it by opinion. M. de Stauren published a terrible document, attacking the societies, and founded, it was said, upon information furnished by Kotzebue. This publication made a great stir, not only at Jena, but throughout all Germany. Here is the trace of this event that we find in Sand's journal:—

"*24th November*

"To-day, after working with much ease and assiduity, I went out about four with E. As we crossed the market-place we heard Kotzebue's new and venomous insult read. By what a fury that man is possessed against the *Burschen* and against all who love Germany!"

Thus for the first time and in these terms Sand's journal presents the name of the man whom, eighteen months later, he was to slay.

On the 29th, in the evening, Sand writes again :—

"To-morrow I shall set out courageously and joyfully from this place for a pilgrimage to Wonsiedel; there I shall find my large-hearted mother and my tender sister Julia; there I shall cool my head and warm my heart. Probably I shall be present at my good Fritz's marriage with Louisa, and at the baptism of my very dear Durchmith's first-born. God, O my Father, as Thou hast been with me during my sad course, be with me still on my happy road."

This journey did in fact greatly cheer Sand. Since Dittmar's death his attacks of hypochondria had disappeared. While Dittmar lived he might die; Dittmar being dead, it was his part to live.

On the 11th of December he left Wonsiedel, to return to Jena, and on the 31st of the same month he wrote this prayer in his journal :—

"O merciful Saviour! I began this year with prayer, and in these last days I have been subject to distraction and ill-disposed. When I look backward, I find, alas! that I have not become better; but I have entered more profoundly into life, and, should occasion present, I now feel strength to act.

"It is because Thou hast always been with me, Lord, even when I was not with Thee."

If our readers have followed with some attention the different extracts from the journal that we have placed before them, they must have seen Sand's resolution gradually growing stronger and his brain becoming excited. From the beginning of the year 1818, one feels his view, which long was timid and wandering, taking in a wider horizon and fixing itself on a nobler aim. He is no longer ambitious of the pastor's simple life or of the narrow influence which he might gain in a little community, and which, in his juvenile modesty, had seemed

the height of good fortune and happiness; it is now his native land, his German people, nay, all humanity, which he embraces in his gigantic plans of political regeneration. Thus, on the flyleaf of his journal for the year 1818, he writes:—

"Lord, let me strengthen myself in the idea that I have conceived of the deliverance of humanity by the holy sacrifice of Thy Son. Grant that I may be a Christ for Germany, and that, like and through Jesus, I may be strong and patient in suffering."

But the anti-republican pamphlets of Kotzebue increased in number and gained a fatal influence upon the minds of rulers. Nearly all the persons who were attacked in these pamphlets were known and esteemed at Jena; and it may easily be comprehended what effects were produced by such insults upon these young heads and noble hearts, which carried conviction to the point of blindness and enthusiasm to that of fanaticism.

Thus, here is what Sand wrote in his diary on the 5th of May:—

"Lord, what causes this melancholy anguish which has again taken possession of me? But a firm and constant will surmounts everything, and the idea of the country gives joy and courage to the saddest and the weakest. When I think of that, I am always amazed that there is none among us found courageous enough to drive a knife into the breast of Kotzebue or of any other traitor."

Still dominated by the same thought, he continues thus on the 18th of May:—

"A man is nothing in comparison with a nation; he is a unity compared with millions, a minute compared with a century. A man, whom nothing precedes and nothing follows, is born, lives, and dies in a longer or shorter time, which, relatively to eternity, hardly equals the duration of a lightning flash. A nation, on the contrary, is immortal."

From time to time, however, amid these thoughts that bear the impress of that political fatality which was driving him

towards the deed of bloodshed, the kindly and joyous youth reappears. On the 24th of June he writes to his mother:—

"I have received your long and beautiful letter, accompanied by the very complete and well-chosen outfit which you send me. The sight of this fine linen gave me back one of the joys of my childhood. These are fresh benefits. My prayers never remain unfulfilled, and I have continual cause to thank you and God. I receive, all at once, shirts, two pairs of fine sheets, a present of your work, and of Julia's and Caroline's work, dainties and sweetmeats, so that I am still jumping with joy and I turned three times on my heels when I opened the little parcel. Receive the thanks of my heart, and share, as giver, in the joy of him who has received.

"To-day, however, is a serious day, the last day of spring and the anniversary of that on which I lost my noble and good Dittmar. I am a prey to a thousand different and confused feelings; but I have only two passions left in me which remain upright and like two pillars of brass support this whole chaos—the thought of God and the love of my country."

During all this time Sand's life remains apparently calm and equal; the inward storm is calmed; he rejoices in his application to work and his cheerful temper. However, from time to time, he makes great complaints to himself of his propensity to love dainty food, which he does not always find it possible to conquer. Then, in his self-contempt, he calls himself "fig-stomach" or "cake-stomach." But amid all this the religious and political exaltation continues. He makes a propagandist journey with his friends to Leipzig, to Wittemberg, and to Berlin, and visits all the battlefields near to the road that he follows. On the 18th of October he is back at Jena, where he resumes his studies with more application than ever. It is among such university studies that the year 1818 closes for him, and we should hardly suspect the terrible resolution which he has taken, were it not that we find in his journal this last note, dated the 31st of December:—

"I finish the last day of this year 1818, then, in a serious and solemn mood, and I have decided that the Christmas feast which has just gone by will be the last Christmas feast that I shall celebrate. If anything is to come of our efforts, if the cause of humanity is to assume the upper hand in our country, if in this faithless epoch any noble feelings can spring up afresh and make way, it can only happen if the wretch, the traitor, the seducer of youth, the infamous Kotzebue, falls! I am fully convinced of this, and until I have accomplished the work upon which I have resolved, I shall have no rest. Lord, Thou who knowest that I have devoted my life to this great action, I only need, now that it is fixed in my mind, to beg of Thee true firmness and courage of soul."

Here Sand's diary ends; he had begun it to strengthen himself; he had reached his aim; he needed nothing more. From this moment he was occupied by nothing but this single idea, and he continued slowly to mature the plan in his head in order to familiarise himself with its execution; but all the impressions arising from this thought remained in his own mind, and none was manifested on the surface. To everyone else he was the same; but for some little time past, a complete and unaltered serenity, accompanied by a visible and cheerful return of inclination towards life, had been noticed in him. He had made no change in the hours or the duration of his studies; but he had begun to attend the anatomical classes very assiduously. One day he was seen to give even more than his customary attention to a lesson in which the professor was demonstrating the various functions of the heart; he examined with the greatest care the place occupied by it in the chest, asking to have some of the demonstrations repeated two or three times, and when he went out, questioning some of the young men who were following the medical courses, about the susceptibility of the organ, which cannot receive ever so slight a blow without death ensuing from that blow: all this with so perfect an indifference and calmness that no one about him conceived any suspicion.

Another day, A. S., one of his friends, came into his room. Sand, who had heard him coming up, was standing by the table, with a paper-knife in his hand, waiting for him; directly the visitor came in, Sand flung himself upon him, struck him lightly on the forehead, and then, as he put up his hands to ward off the blow, struck him rather more violently in the chest; then, satisfied with his experiment, said—

"You see, when you want to kill a man, that is the way to do it; you threaten the face, he puts up his hands, and while he does so you thrust a dagger into his heart."

The two young men laughed heartily over this murderous demonstration, and A. S. related it that evening at the wine-shop as one of the peculiarities of character that were common in his friend. After the event, the pantomime explained itself.

The month of March arrived. Sand became day by day calmer, more affectionate, and kinder; it might be thought that in the moment of leaving his friends for ever he wished to leave them an ineffaceable remembrance of him. At last he announced that on account of several family affairs he was about to undertake a little journey, and set about all his preparations with his usual care, but with a serenity never previously seen in him. Up to that time he had continued to work as usual, not relaxing for an instant; for there was a possibility that Kotzebue might die or be killed by somebody else before the term that Sand had fixed to himself, and in that case he did not wish to have lost time. On the 7th of March he invited all his friends to spend the evening with him, and announced his departure for the next day but one, the 9th. All of them then proposed to him to escort him for some leagues, but Sand refused; he feared lest this demonstration, innocent though it were, might compromise them later on. He set forth alone, therefore, after having hired his lodgings for another half-year, in order to obviate any suspicion, and went by way of Erfurt and Eisenach, in order to visit the Wartburg. From that place he went to Frankfort, where he slept on the 17th, and on the morrow he continued his journey by way of Darmstadt. At last, on the 23rd, at nine in the morning, he

arrived at the top of the little hill where we found him at the beginning of this narrative. Throughout the journey he had been the amiable and happy young man whom no one could see without liking.

Having reached Mannheim, he took a room at the Weinberg, and wrote his name as "Henry" in the visitors' list. He immediately inquired where Kotzebue lived. The councillor dwelt near the church of the Jesuits; his house was at the corner of a street, and though Sand's informants could not tell him exactly the letter, they assured him it was not possible to mistake the house.[1]

Sand went at once to Kotzebue's house: it was about ten o'clock; he was told that the councillor went to walk for an hour or two every morning in the park of Mannheim. Sand inquired about the path in which he generally walked, and about the clothes he wore, for never having seen him he could only recognise him by the description. Kotzebue chanced to take another path. Sand walked about the park for an hour, but seeing no one who corresponded to the description given him, went back to the house. Kotzebue had come in, but was at breakfast and could not see him.

Sand went back to the Weinberg, and sat down to the midday *table d'hôte*, where he dined with an appearance of such calmness, and even of such happiness, that his conversation, which was now lively, now simple, and now dignified, was remarked by everybody. At five in the afternoon he returned a third time to the house of Kotzebue, who was giving a great dinner that day; but orders had been given to admit Sand. He was shown into a little room opening out of the anteroom, and a moment after, Kotzebue came in.

Sand then performed the drama which he had rehearsed upon his friend A. S. Kotzebue, finding his face threatened, put his hands up to it, and left his breast exposed; Sand at once stabbed him to the heart; Kotzebue gave one cry, staggered, and fell back into an arm-chair: he was dead.

At the cry a little girl of six years old ran in, one of those charm-

[1] At Mannheim houses are marked by letters, not by numbers.

ing German children, with the faces of cherubs, blue-eyed, with long flowing hair. She flung herself upon the body of Kotzebue, calling her father with piercing cries. Sand, standing at the door, could not endure this sight, and without going farther, he thrust the dagger, still covered with Kotzebue's blood, up to the hilt into his own breast. Then, seeing to his surprise that notwithstanding the terrible wound he had just given himself he did not feel the approach of death, and not wishing to fall alive into the hands of the servants who were running in, he rushed to the staircase. The persons who were invited were just coming in; they, seeing a young man, pale and bleeding and with a knife in his breast, uttered loud cries, and stood aside, instead of stopping him. Sand therefore passed down the staircase and reached the street door; ten paces off, a patrol was passing, on the way to relieve the sentinels at the castle; Sand thought these men had been summoned by the cries that followed him; he threw himself on his knees in the middle of the street, and said, "Father, receive my soul!"

Then, drawing the knife from the wound, he gave himself a second blow below the former, and fell insensible.

Sand was carried to the hospital and guarded with the utmost strictness; the wounds were serious, but, thanks to the skill of the physicians who were called in, were not mortal; one of them even healed eventually; but as to the second, the blade having gone between the costal pleura and the pulmonary pleura, an effusion of blood occurred between the two layers, so that, instead of closing the wound, it was kept carefully open, in order that the blood extravasated during the night might be drawn off every morning by means of a pump, as is done in the operation for empyæmia. Notwithstanding these cares, Sand was for three months between life and death.

When, on the 26th of March, the news of Kotzebue's assassination came from Mannheim to Jena, the academic senate caused Sand's room to be opened, and found two letters—one addressed to his friends of the *Burschenschaft*, in which he declared that he no longer belonged to their society, since he did not wish that their brotherhood should include a man about to die on

L. Boulanger, del. *N. Desmadryl, sculp.*

THE ASSASSINATION OF KOTZEBUE

the scaffold. The other letter, which bore this superscription, "To my nearest and dearest," was an exact account of what he meant to do, and of the motives which had made him determine upon this act. Though the letter is a little long, it is so solemn and so antique in spirit, that we do not hesitate to present it in its entirety to our readers:—

"To all my own
"Loyal and eternally cherished souls:

"Why add still further to your sadness? I asked myself, and I hesitated to write to you; but my silence would have wounded the religion of the heart; and the deeper a grief the more it needs, before it can be blotted out, to drain to the dregs its cup of bitterness. Forth from my agonised breast, then; forth, long and cruel torment of a last conversation, which alone, however, when sincere, can alleviate the pain of parting.

"This letter brings you the last farewell of your son and your brother.

"The greatest misfortune of life for any generous heart is to see the cause of God stopped short in its developments by our fault; and the most dishonouring infamy would be to suffer that the fine things acquired bravely by thousands of men, and for which thousands of men have joyfully sacrificed themselves, should be no more than a transient dream, without real and positive consequences. The resurrection of our German life was begun in these last twenty years, and particularly in the sacred year 1813, with a courage inspired by God. But now the house of our fathers is shaken from the summit to the base. Forward! let us raise it, new and fair, and such as the true temple of the true God should be.

"Small is the number of those who resist, and who wish to oppose themselves as a dyke against the torrent of the progress of higher humanity among the German people. Why should vast whole masses bow beneath the yoke of a perverse minority? And why, scarcely healed, should we fall back into a worse disease than that which we are leaving behind?

"Many of these seducers, and those are the most infamous, are playing the game of corruption with us; among them is Kotzebue, the most cunning and the worst of all, a real talking machine emitting all sorts of detestable speech and pernicious advice. His voice is skilful in removing from us all anger and bitterness against the most unjust measures, and is just such as kings require to put us to sleep again in that old lazy slumber which is the death of nations. Every day he odiously betrays his country, and nevertheless, despite his treason, remains an idol for half Germany, which, dazzled by him, accepts unresisting the poison poured out by him in his periodic pamphlets, wrapped up and protected as he is by the seductive mantle of a great poetic reputation. Incited by him, the princes of Germany, who have forgotten their promises, will allow nothing free or good to be accomplished; or if anything of the kind is accomplished in spite of them, they will league themselves with the French to annihilate it. That the history of our time may not be covered with eternal ignominy, it is necessary that he should fall.

"I have always said that if we wish to find a great and supreme remedy for the state of abasement in which we are, none must shrink from combat nor from suffering; and the real liberty of the German people will only be assured when the good citizen sets himself or some other stake upon the game, and when every true son of the country, prepared for the struggle for justice, despises the good things of this world, and only desires those celestial good things which death holds in charge.

"Who then will strike this miserable hireling, this venal traitor?

"I have long been waiting in fear, in prayer, and in tears—I who am not born for murder—for some other to be beforehand with me, to set me free, and suffer me to continue my way along the sweet and peaceful path that I had chosen for myself. Well, despite my prayers and my tears, he who should strike does not present himself; indeed, every man, like myself, has a right to count upon some other, and everyone thus counting,

every hour's delay, but makes our state worse; for at any moment —and how deep a shame would that be for us!—Kotzebue may leave Germany, unpunished, and go to devour in Russia the treasures for which he has exchanged his honour, his conscience, and his German name. Who can preserve us from this shame, if every man, if I myself, do not feel strength to make myself the chosen instrument of God's justice? Therefore, forward! It shall be I who will courageously rush upon him (do not be alarmed), on him, the loathsome seducer; it shall be I who will kill the traitor, so that his misguiding voice, being extinguished, shall cease to lead us astray from the lessons of history and from the Spirit of God. An irresistible and solemn duty impels me to this deed, ever since I have recognised to what high destinies the German nation may attain during this century, and ever since I have come to know the dastard and hypocrite who alone prevents it from reaching them; for me, as for every German who seeks the public good, this desire has become a strict and binding necessity. May I, by this national vengeance, indicate to all upright and loyal consciences where the true danger lies, and save our vilified and calumniated societies from the imminent danger that threatens them! May I, in short, spread terror among the cowardly and wicked, and courage and faith among the good! Speeches and writings lead to nothing; only actions *work*.

"I will act, therefore; and though driven violently away from my fair dreams of the future, I am none the less full of trust in God; I even experience a celestial joy, now that, like the Hebrews when they sought the promised land, I see traced before me, through darkness and death, that road at the end of which I shall have paid my debt to my country.

"Farewell, then, faithful hearts: true, this early separation is hard; true, your hopes, like my wishes, are disappointed; but let us be consoled by the primary thought that we have done what the voice of our country called upon us to do; that, you know, is the principle according to which I have always lived. You will doubtless say among yourselves, 'Yet, thanks to our sacrifices, he had learned to know life and to taste the

joys of earth, and he seemed deeply to love his native country and the humble estate to which he was called.' Alas, yes, that is true! Under your protection, and amid your numberless sacrifices, my native land and life had become profoundly dear to me. Yes, thanks to you, I have penetrated into the Eden of knowledge, and have lived the free life of thought; thanks to you, I have looked into history, and have then returned to my own conscience to attach myself to the solid pillars of faith in the Eternal.

"Yes, I was to pass gently through this life as a preacher of the gospel; yes, in my constancy to my calling I was to be sheltered from the storms of this existence. But would that suffice to avert the danger that threatens Germany? And you yourselves, in your infinite love, should you not rather push me on to risk my life for the good of all? So many modern Greeks have fallen already to free their country from the yoke of the Turks, and have died almost without any result and without any hope; and yet thousands of fresh martyrs keep up their courage and are ready to fall in their turn; and should I, then, hesitate to die?

"That I do not recognise your love, or that your love is but a trifling consideration with me, you will not believe. What else should impel me to die if not my devotion to you and to Germany, and the need of proving this devotion to my family and my country?

"You, mother, will say, 'Why have I brought up a son whom I loved and who loved me, for whom I have undergone a thousand cares and toils, who, thanks to my prayers and my example, was impressionable to good influences, and from whom, after my long and weary course, I hoped to receive attentions like those which I had given him? Why does he now abandon me?'

"Oh, my kind and tender mother! Yes, you will perhaps say that; but could not the mother of anyone else say the same, and everything go off thus in words when there is need to act for the country? And if no one would act, what would become of that mother of us all who is called Germany?

Bourdet, del. *Boilly, sculp.*

THE EXECUTION OF KARL SAND

"But no; such complaints are far from you, you noble woman! I understood your appeal once before, and at this present hour, if no one came forward in the German cause, you yourself would urge me to the fight. I have two brothers and two sisters before me, all noble and loyal. They will remain to you, mother; and besides, you will have for sons all the children of Germany who love their country.

"Every man has a destiny which he has to accomplish: mine is devoted to the action that I am about to undertake; if I were to live another fifty years, I could not live more happily than I have done lately. Farewell, mother: I commend you to the protection of God; may He raise you to that joy which misfortunes can no longer trouble! Take your grandchildren, to whom I should so much have liked to be a loving friend, to the top of our beautiful mountains soon. There, on that altar raised by the Lord Himself in the midst of Germany, let them devote themselves, swearing to take up the sword as soon as they have strength to lift it, and to lay it down only when our brethren are all united in liberty, when all Germans, having a liberal constitution, are great before the Lord, powerful against their neighbours, and united among themselves.

"May my country ever raise her happy gaze to Thee, Almighty Father! May Thy blessing fall abundantly upon her harvests ready to be cut and her armies ready for battle, and recognising the blessings that Thou hast showered upon us, may the German nation ever be first among nations to rise and uphold the cause of humanity, which is Thy image upon earth!

"Your eternally attached son, brother, and friend,

"KARL LUDWIG SAND

"JENA, *the beginning of March* 1819"

Sand, who, as we have said, had at first been taken to the hospital, was removed at the end of three months to the prison at Mannheim, where the governor, Mr. G——, had caused a room to be prepared for him. There he remained two months

longer in a state of extreme weakness: his left arm was completely paralysed; his voice was very weak; every movement gave him horrible pain, and thus it was not until the 11th of August—that is to say, five months after the event that we have narrated—that he was able to write to his family the following letter:—

"My very dear Parents,—The grand-duke's commission of inquiry informed me yesterday that it might be possible I should have the intense joy of a visit from you, and that I might perhaps see you here and embrace you—you, mother, and some of my brothers and sisters.

"Without being surprised at this fresh proof of your motherly love, I have felt an ardent remembrance reawaken of the happy life that we spent gently together. Joy and grief, desire and sacrifice, agitate my heart violently, and I have had to weigh these various impulses one against the other, and with the force of reason, in order to resume mastery of myself and to take a decision in regard to my wishes.

"The balance has inclined in the direction of sacrifice.

"You know, mother, how much joy and courage a look from your eyes, daily intercourse with you, and your pious and high-minded conversation, might bring me during my very short time. But you also know my position, and you are too well acquainted with the natural course of all these painful inquiries, not to feel as I do, that such annoyance, continually recurring, would greatly trouble the pleasure of our companionship, if it did not indeed succeed in entirely destroying it. Then, mother, after the long and fatiguing journey that you would be obliged to make in order to see me, think of the terrible sorrow of the farewell when the moment came to part in this world. Let us therefore abide by the sacrifice, according to God's will, and let us yield ourselves only to that sweet community of thought which distance cannot interrupt, in which I find my only joys, and which, in spite of men, will always be granted us by the Lord, our Father.

"As for my physical state, I know nothing about it. You see,

however, since at last I am writing to you myself, that I have come past my first uncertainties. As for the rest, I know too little of the structure of my own body to give any opinion as to what my wounds may determine for it. Except that a little strength has returned to me, its state is still the same, and I endure it calmly and patiently; for God comes to my help, and gives me courage and firmness. He will help me, believe me, to find all the joys of the soul and to be strong in mind. Amen.

"May you live happy!—Your deeply respectful son,

"KARL-LUDWIG SAND"

A month after this letter came tender answers from all the family. We will quote only that of Sand's mother, because it completes the idea which the reader may have formed already of this great-hearted woman, as her son always calls her.

"DEAR, INEXPRESSIBLY DEAR KARL,—How sweet it was to me to see the writing of your beloved hand after so long a time! No journey would have been so painful and no road so long as to prevent me from coming to you, and I would go, in deep and infinite love, to any end of the earth in the mere hope of catching sight of you.

"But, as I well know both your tender affection and your profound anxiety for me, and as you give me, so firmly and upon such manly reflection, reasons against which I can say nothing, and which I can but honour, it shall be, my well-beloved Karl, as you have wished and decided. We will continue, without speech, to communicate our thoughts; but be satisfied, nothing can separate us; I enfold you in my soul, and my maternal thoughts watch over you.

"May this infinite love which upholds us, strengthens us, and leads us all to a better life, preserve, dear Karl, your courage and firmness.

"Farewell, and be invariably assured that I shall never cease to love you strongly and deeply.

"Your faithful mother, who loves you to eternity."

Sand replied:—

"*January* 1820, from my isle of Patmos

"MY DEAR PARENTS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS,—In the middle of the month of September last year I received, through the grand-duke's special commission of inquiry, whose humanity you have already appreciated, your dear letters of the end of August and the beginning of September, which had such magical influence that they inundated me with joy by transporting me into the inmost circle of your hearts.

"You, my tender father, you write to me on the sixty-seventh anniversary of your birth, and you bless me by the outpouring of your most tender love.

"You, my well-beloved mother, you deign to promise the continuance of your maternal affection, in which I have at all times constantly believed; and thus I have received the blessings of both of you, which, in my present position, will exercise a more beneficent influence upon me than any of the things that all the kings of the earth, united together, could grant me. Yes, you strengthen me abundantly by your blessed love, and I render thanks to you, my beloved parents, with that respectful submission that my heart will always inculcate as the first duty of a son.

"But the greater your love and the more affectionate your letters, the more do I suffer, I must acknowledge, from the voluntary sacrifice that we have imposed upon ourselves in not seeing one another; and the only reason, my dear parents, why I have delayed to reply to you, was to give myself time to recover the strength which I had lost.

"You too, dear brother-in-law and dear sister, assure me of your sincere and uninterrupted attachment. And yet, after the fright that I have spread among you all, you seem not to know exactly what to think of me; but my heart, full of gratitude for your past kindness, comforts itself; for your actions speak and tell me that, even if you wished no longer to love me as I love you, you would not be able to do otherwise. These

actions mean more to me at this hour than any possible protestations, nay, than even the tenderest words.

"And you also, my kind brother, you would have consented to hurry with our beloved mother to the shores of the Rhine, to this place where the real links of the soul were welded between us, where we were doubly brothers;[1] but tell me, are you not really here, in thought and in spirit, when I consider the rich fountain of consolation brought me by your cordial and tender letter?

"And you, kind sister-in-law, as you showed yourself from the first, in your delicate tenderness, a true sister, so I find you again at present. There are still the same tender relations, still the same sisterly affection; your consolations, which emanate from a deep and submissive piety, have fallen refreshingly into the depths of my heart. But, dear sister-in-law, I must tell you, as well as the others, that you are too liberal towards me in dispensing your esteem and praises, and your exaggeration has cast me back face to face with my inmost judge, who has shown me in the mirror of my conscience the image of my every weakness.

"You, kind Julia, you desire nothing else but to save me from the fate that awaits me, and you assure me in your own name and in that of you all, that you, like the others, would rejoice to endure it in my place; in that I recognise you fully, and I recognise, too, those sweet and tender relations in which we have been brought up from childhood. Oh, be comforted, dear Julia; thanks to the protection of God, I promise you that it will be easy to me, much easier than I should have thought, to bear what falls to my lot.

"Receive, then, all of you, my warm and sincere thanks for having thus rejoiced my heart.

"Now that I know from these strengthening letters that, like the prodigal son, the love and goodness of my family are greater on my return than at my departure, I will, as carefully as possible, paint for you my physical and moral state, and I

[1] It was in the neighbourhood of Mannheim that Karl and his brother met under the same banner in 1815.

pray God to supplement my words by His strength, so that my letter may contain an equivalent of what yours brought to me, and may help you to reach that state of calm and serenity to which I have myself attained.

"Hardened, by having gained power over myself, against the good and the ill of this earth, you know already that of late years I have lived only for moral joys, and I must say that, touched by my efforts, doubtless, the Lord, who is the sacred fount of all that is good, has rendered me apt in seeking them and in tasting them to the full. God is ever near me, as formerly, and I find in Him the sovereign principle of the creation of all things; in Him, our holy Father, not only consolation and strength, but an unalterable Friend, full of the holiest love, who will accompany me in all places where I may need His consolations. Assuredly, if He had turned from me, or if I had turned away my eyes from Him, I should now find myself very unfortunate and wretched; but by His grace, on the contrary, lowly and weak creature as I am, He makes me strong and powerful against whatever can befall me.

"What I have hitherto revered as sacred, what I have desired as good, what I have aspired to as heavenly, has in no respect changed now. And I thank God for it, for I should now be in great despair if I were compelled to recognise that my heart had adored deceptive images and enwrapped itself in fugitive chimeras. Thus my faith in these ideas and my pure love for them, guardian angels of my spirit as they are, increase moment by moment, and will go on increasing to my end, and I hope that I may pass all the more easily from this world into eternity. I pass my silent life in Christian exaltation and humility, and I sometimes have those visions from above through which I have, from my birth, adored heaven upon earth, and which give me power to raise myself to the Lord upon the eager wings of my prayers. My illness, though long, painful, and cruel, has always been sufficiently mastered by my will to let me busy myself to some result with history, positive sciences, and the finer parts of religious education, and when my suffering became more violent and for a time interrupted these occupations, I struggled success-

fully, nevertheless, against *ennui*; for the memories of the past, my resignation to the present, and my faith in the future were rich enough and strong enough in me and round me to prevent my falling from my terrestrial paradise. According to my principles, I would never, in the position in which I am and in which I have placed myself, have been willing to ask anything for my own comfort; but so much kindness and care have been lavished upon me, with so much delicacy and humanity,—which, alas! I am unable to return,—by every person with whom I have been brought into contact, that wishes which I should not have dared to frame in the most private recesses of my heart have been more than exceeded. I have never been so much overcome by bodily pains that I could not say within myself, while I lifted my thoughts to heaven, 'Come what may of this ray.' And great as these pains have been, I could not dream of comparing them with those sufferings of the soul that we feel so profoundly and poignantly in the recognition of our weaknesses and faults.

"Moreover, these pains seldom now cause me to lose consciousness; the swelling and inflammation never made great headway, and the fever has always been moderate, though for nearly ten months I have been forced to remain lying on my back, unable to raise myself, and although more than forty pints of matter have come from my chest at the place where the heart is. No, on the contrary, the wound, though still open, is in a good state; and I owe that not only to the excellent nursing around me, but also to the pure blood that I received from you, my mother. Thus I have lacked neither earthly assistance nor heavenly encouragement. Thus, on the anniversary of my birth, I had every reason—oh, not to curse the hour in which I was born, but, on the contrary, after serious contemplation of the world, to thank God and you, my dear parents, for the life that you have given me! I celebrated it, on the 18th of October, by a peaceful and ardent submission to the holy will of God. On Christmas Day I tried to put myself into the temper of children who are devoted to the Lord; and with God's help the new year will pass like its predecessor, in

bodily pain, perhaps, but certainly in spiritual joy. And with this wish, the only one that I form, I address myself to you, my dear parents, and to you and yours, my dear brothers and sisters.

"I cannot hope to see a twenty-fifth new year; so may the prayer that I have just made be granted! May this picture of my present state afford you some tranquillity, and may this letter that I write to you from the depths of my heart not only prove to you that I am not unworthy of the inexpressible love that you all display, but, on the contrary, ensure this love to me for eternity.

"Within the last few days I have also received your dear letter of the 2nd of December, my kind mother, and the grand-duke's commission has deigned to let me also read my kind brother's letter which accompanied yours. You give me the best of news in regard to the health of all of you, and send me preserved fruits from our dear home. I thank you for them from the bottom of my heart. What causes me most joy in the matter is that you have been solicitously busy about me in summer as in winter, and that you and my dear Julia gathered them and prepared them for me at home, and I abandon my whole soul to that sweet enjoyment.

"I rejoice sincerely at my little cousin's coming into the world; I joyfully congratulate the good parents and the grand-parents; I transport myself, for his baptism, into that beloved parish, where I offer him my affection as his Christian brother, and call down on him all the blessings of heaven.

"We shall be obliged, I think, to give up this correspondence, so as not to inconvenience the grand-duke's commission. I finish, therefore, by assuring you once more, but for the last time, perhaps, of my profound filial submission and of my fraternal affection.—Your most tenderly attached

"KARL-LUDWIG SAND"

Indeed, from that moment all correspondence between Karl and his family ceased, and he only wrote to them, when he knew his fate, one more letter, which we shall see later on.

We have seen by what attentions Sand was surrounded; their humanity never flagged for an instant. It is the truth, too, that no one saw in him an ordinary murderer, that many pitied him under their breath, and that some excused him aloud. The very commission appointed by the grand-duke prolonged the affair as much as possible; for the severity of Sand's wounds had at first given rise to the belief that there would be no need of calling in the executioner, and the commission was well pleased that God should have undertaken the execution of the judgment. But these expectations were deceived: the skill of the doctor defeated, not indeed the wound, but death. Sand did not recover, but he remained alive; and it began to be evident that it would be needful to kill him.

Indeed, the Emperor Alexander, who had appointed Kotzebue his councillor, and who was under no misapprehension as to the cause of the murder, urgently demanded that justice should take its course. The commission of inquiry was therefore obliged to set to work; but as its members were sincerely desirous of having some pretext to delay their proceedings, they ordered that a physician from Heidelberg should visit Sand and make an exact report upon his case; as Sand was kept lying down and as he could not be executed in his bed, they hoped that the physician's report, by declaring it impossible for the prisoner to rise, would come to their assistance and necessitate a further respite.

The chosen doctor came accordingly to Mannheim, and introducing himself to Sand as though attracted by the interest that he inspired, asked him whether he did not feel somewhat better, and whether it would be impossible to rise. Sand looked at him for an instant, and then said, with a smile—

"I understand, sir; they wish to know whether I am strong enough to mount a scaffold: I know nothing about it myself, but we will make the experiment together."

With these words he rose, and accomplishing, with superhuman courage, what he had not attempted for fourteen

months, walked twice round the room, came back to his bed, upon which he seated himself, and said—

"You see, sir, I am strong enough; it would therefore be wasting precious time to keep my judges longer about my affair; so let them deliver their judgment, for nothing now prevents its execution."

The doctor made his report; there was no way of retreat; Russia was becoming more and more pressing, and on the 5th of May 1820 the high court of justice delivered the following judgment, which was confirmed on the 12th by His Royal Highness the Grand-Duke of Baden:—

"In the matters under investigation, and after administration of the interrogatory and hearing the defences, and considering the united opinions of the court of justice at Mannheim and the further consultations of the court of justice which declare the accused, Karl Sand of Wonsiedel, guilty of murder, even on his own confession, upon the person of the Russian imperial Councillor of State, Kotzebue; it is ordered accordingly, for his just punishment and for an example that may debtor other people, that he is to be put from life to death by the sword.

"All the costs of these investigations, including those occasioned by his public execution, will be defrayed from the funds of the law department, on account of his want of means."

We see that, though it condemned the accused to death, which indeed could hardly be avoided, the sentence was both in form and substance as mild as possible, since, though Sand was convicted, his poor family was not reduced by the expenses of a long and costly trial to complete ruin.

Five days were still allowed to elapse, and the verdict was not announced until the 17th. When Sand was informed that two councillors of justice were at the door, he guessed that they were coming to read his sentence to him; he asked a moment to rise, which he had done but once before, in the instance already narrated, during fourteen months. And indeed he was so weak that he could not stand to hear the

sentence, and after having greeted the deputation that death sent to him, he asked to sit down, saying that he did so not from cowardice of soul but from weakness of body; then he added, "You are welcome, gentlemen; for I have suffered so much for fourteen months past that you come to me as angels of deliverance."

He heard the sentence quite unaffectedly and with a gentle smile upon his lips; then, when the reading was finished, he said—

"I look for no better fate, gentlemen, and when, more than a year ago, I paused on the little hill that overlooks the town, I saw beforehand the place where my grave would be; and so I ought to thank God and man for having prolonged my existence up to to-day."

The councillors withdrew; Sand stood up a second time to greet them on their departure, as he had done on their entrance; then he sat down again pensively in his chair, by which Mr. G——, the governor of the prison, was standing. After a moment of silence, a tear appeared at each of the condemned man's eyelids, and ran down his cheeks; then turning suddenly to Mr. G——, whom he liked very much, he said, "I hope that my parents would rather see me die by this violent death than of some slow and shameful disease. As for me, I am glad that I shall soon hear the hour strike in which my death will satisfy those who hate me, and those whom, according to my principles, I ought to hate."

Then he wrote to his family:—

"MANNHEIM
"*17th of the month of spring*, 1820

"DEAR PARENTS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS,—You should have received my last letters through the grand-duke's commission; in them I answered yours, and tried to console you for my position by describing the state of my soul as it is, the contempt to which I have attained for everything fragile and earthly, and by which one must necessarily be overcome when such matters are weighed against the fulfilment of

an idea, or that intellectual liberty which alone can nourish the soul; in a word, I tried to console you by the assurance that the feelings, principles, and convictions of which I formerly spoke are faithfully preserved in me and have remained exactly the same; but I am sure all this was an unnecessary precaution on my part, for there was never a time when you asked anything else of me than *to have God before my eyes and in my heart*; and you have seen how, under your guidance, this precept so passed into my soul that it became my sole object of happiness for this world and the next; no doubt, as He was in and near me, God will be in and near you at the moment when this letter brings you the news of my sentence. I die willingly, and the Lord will give me strength to die as one ought to die.

"I write to you perfectly quiet and calm about all things, and I hope that your lives too will pass calmly and tranquilly until the moment when our souls meet again full of fresh force to love one another and to share eternal happiness together.

"As for me, such as I have lived as long as I have known myself—that is to say, in a serenity full of celestial desires and a courageous and indefatigable love of liberty, such I am about to die.

"May God be with you and with me!—Your son, brother, and friend, KARL-LUDWIG SAND"

From that moment his serenity remained untroubled; during the whole day he talked more gaily than usual, slept well, did not awake until half-past seven, said that he felt stronger, and thanked God for visiting him thus.

The nature of the verdict had been known since the day before, and it had been learned that the execution was fixed for the 20th of May—that is to say, three full days after the sentence had been read to the accused.

Henceforward, with Sand's permission, persons who wished to speak to him and whom he was not reluctant to see, were admitted: three among these paid him long and noteworthy visits.

One was Major Holzungen, of the Baden army, who was in command of the patrol that had arrested him, or rather picked him up, dying, and carried him to the hospital. He asked him whether he recognised him, and Sand's head was so clear when he stabbed himself, that although he saw the major only for a moment and had never seen him again since, he remembered the minutest details of the costume which he had been wearing fourteen months previously, and which was the full-dress uniform. When the talk fell upon the death to which Sand was to submit at so early an age, the major pitied him; but Sand answered, with a smile, "There is only one difference between you and me, major; it is that I shall die for my convictions, and you will die for someone else's convictions."

After the major came a young student from Jena whom Sand had known at the university. He happened to be in the duchy of Baden and wished to visit him. Their recognition was touching, and the student wept much; but Sand consoled him with his usual calmness and serenity.

Then a workman asked to be admitted to see Sand, on the plea that he had been his schoolfellow at Wonsiedel, and although he did not remember his name, he ordered him to be let in: the workman reminded him that he had been one of the little army that Sand had commanded on the day of the assult of St. Catherine's tower. This indication guided Sand, who recognised him perfectly, and then spoke with tender affection of his native place and his dear mountains. He further charged him to greet his family, and to beg his mother, father, brothers, and sisters once more not to be grieved on his account, since the messenger who undertook to deliver his last words could testify in how calm and joyful a temper he was awaiting death.

To this workman succeeded one of the guests whom Sand had met on the staircase directly after Kotzebue's death. He asked him whether he acknowledged his crime and whether he felt any repentance. Sand replied, "I had thought about it during a whole year. I have been thinking

of it for fourteen months, and my opinion has never varied in any respect: I did what I should have done."

After the departure of this last visitor, Sand sent for Mr. G——, the governor of the prison, and told him that he should like to talk to the executioner before the execution, since he wished to ask for instructions as to how he should hold himself so as to render the operation most certain and easy. Mr. G—— made some objections, but Sand insisted with his usual gentleness, and Mr. G—— at last promised that the man in question should be asked to call at the prison as soon as he arrived from Heidelberg, where he lived.

The rest of the day was spent in seeing more visitors and in philosophical and moral talks, in which Sand developed his social and religious theories with a lucidity of expression and an elevation of thought such as he had, perhaps, never before shown. The governor of the prison, from whom I heard these details, told me that he should all his life regret that he did not know shorthand, so that he might have noted all these thoughts, which would have formed a pendant to the Phædo.

Night came. Sand spent part of the evening writing; it is thought that he was composing a poem; but no doubt he burned it, for no trace of it was found. At eleven he went to bed, and slept until six in the morning. Next day he bore the dressing of his wound, which was always very painful, with extraordinary courage, without fainting, as he sometimes did, and without suffering a single complaint to escape him: he had spoken the truth; in the presence of death God gave him the grace of allowing his strength to return. The operation was over; Sand was lying down as usual, and Mr. G—— was sitting on the foot of his bed, when the door opened and a man came in and bowed to Sand and to Mr. G——. The governor of the prison immediately stood up, and said to Sand in a voice the emotion of which he could not conceal, "The person who is bowing to you is Mr. Widemann of Heidelberg, to whom you wished to speak."

Then Sand's face was lighted up by a strange joy; he sat

up and said, "Sir, you are welcome." Then, making his visitor sit down by his bed, and taking his hand, he began to thank him for being so obliging, and spoke in so intense a tone and so gentle a voice, that Mr. Widemann, deeply moved, could not answer. Sand encouraged him to speak and to give him the details for which he wished, and in order to reassure him, said, "Be firm, sir; for I, on my part, will not fail you: I will not move; and even if you should need two or three strokes to separate my head from my body, as I am told is sometimes the case, do not be troubled on that account."

Then Sand rose, leaning on Mr. G——, to go through with the executioner the strange and terrible rehearsal of the drama in which he was to play the leading part on the morrow. Mr. Widemann made him sit in a chair and take the required position, and went into all the details of the execution with him. Then Sand, perfectly instructed, begged him not to hurry and to take his time. Then he thanked him beforehand; "for," added he, "afterwards I shall not be able." Then Sand returned to his bed, leaving the executioner paler and more trembling than himself. All these details have been preserved by Mr. G——; for as to the executioner, his emotion was so great that he could remember nothing.

After Mr. Widemann, three clergymen were introduced, with whom Sand conversed upon religious matters: one of them stayed six hours with him, and on leaving him told him that he was commissioned to obtain from him a promise of not speaking to the people at the place of execution. Sand gave the promise, and added, "Even if I desired to do so, my voice has become so weak that people could not hear it."

Meanwhile the scaffold was being erected in the meadow that extends on the left of the road to Heidelberg. It was a platform five to six feet high and ten feet wide each way. As it was expected that, thanks to the interest inspired by the prisoner and to the nearness to Whitsuntide, the crowd would be immense, and as some movement from the universities was apprehended, the prison guards had been trebled, and General

Neustein had been ordered to Mannheim from Carlsruhe, with twelve hundred infantry, three hundred and fifty cavalry, and a company of artillery with guns.

On the afternoon of the 19th there arrived, as had been foreseen, so many students, who took up their abode in the neighbouring villages, that it was decided to put forward the hour of the execution, and to let it take place at five in the morning instead of at eleven, as had been arranged. But Sand's consent was necessary for this; for he could not be executed until three full days after the reading of his sentence, and as the sentence had not been read to him till half-past ten Sand had a right to live till eleven o'clock.

Before four in the morning the officials went into the condemned man's room; he was sleeping so soundly that they were obliged to awaken him. He opened his eyes with a smile, as was his custom, and guessing why they came, asked, "Can I have slept so well that it is already eleven in the morning?" They told him that it was not, but that they had come to ask his permission to put forward the time; for, they told him, some collision between the students and the soldiers was feared, and as the military preparations were very thorough, such a collision could not be otherwise than fatal to his friends. Sand answered that he was ready that very moment, and only asked time enough to take a bath, as the ancients were accustomed to do before going into battle. But as the verbal authorisation which he had given was not sufficient, a pen and paper were given to Sand, and he wrote, with a steady hand and in his usual writing:—

"I thank the authorities of Mannheim for anticipating my most eager wishes by making my execution six hours earlier.

"Sit nomen Domini benedictum.[1]

"From the prison room, May 20th, day of my deliverance.

"KARL-LUDWIG SAND"

When Sand had given these two lines to the recorder, the physician came to him to dress his wound, as usual. Sand

[1] "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

looked at him with a smile, and then asked, "Is it really worth the trouble?"

"You will be stronger for it," answered the physician.

"Then do it," said Sand.

A bath was brought. Sand lay down in it, and had his long and beautiful hair arranged with the greatest care; then his toilet being completed, he put on a frock-coat of the German shape—that is to say, short and with the shirt collar turned back over the shoulders, close white trousers, and high boots. Then Sand seated himself on his bed and prayed some time in a low voice with the clergy; then, when he had finished, he said these two lines of Körner's:—

"All that is earthly is ended,
And the life of heaven begins."

He next took leave of the physician and the priests, saying to them, "Do not attribute the emotion of my voice to weakness but to gratitude." Then, upon these gentlemen offering to accompany him to the scaffold, he said, "There is no need; I am perfectly prepared, at peace with God and with my conscience. Besides, am I not almost a Churchman myself?" And when one of them asked whether he was not going out of life in a spirit of hatred, he returned, "Why, good heavens! have I ever felt any?"

An increasing noise was audible from the street, and Sand said again that he was at their disposal and that he was ready. At this moment the executioner came in with his two assistants; he was dressed in a long wadded black coat, beneath which he hid his sword. Sand offered him his hand affectionately; and as Mr. Widemann, embarrassed by the sword which he wished to keep Sand from seeing, did not venture to come forward, Sand said to him, "Come along and show me your sword; I have never seen one of the kind, and am curious to know what it is like."

Mr. Widemann, pale and trembling, presented the weapon to him; Sand examined it attentively, and tried the edge with his finger.

"Come," said he, "the blade is good; do not tremble, and all will go well." Then, turning to Mr. G——, who was weeping, he said to him, "You will be good enough, will you not, to do me the service of leading me to the scaffold?"

Mr. G—— made a sign of assent with his head, for he could not answer. Sand took his arm, and spoke for the third time, saying once more, "Well, what are you waiting for, gentlemen? I am ready."

When they reached the courtyard, Sand saw all the prisoners weeping at their windows. Although he had never seen them, they were old friends of his; for every time they passed his door, knowing that the student who had killed Kotzebue lay within, they used to lift their chains, that he might not be disturbed by the noise.

All Mannheim was in the streets that led to the place of execution, and many patrols were passing up and down. On the day when the sentence was announced the whole town had been sought through for a chaise in which to convey Sand to the scaffold, but no one, not even the coachbuilders, would either let one out or sell one; and it had been necessary, therefore, to buy one at Heidelberg without saying for what purpose.

Sand found this chaise in the courtyard, and got into it with Mr. G——. Turning to him, he whispered in his ear, "Sir, if you see me turn pale, speak my name to me, my name only, do you hear? That will be enough."

The prison gate was opened, and Sand was seen; then every voice cried with one impulse, "Farewell, Sand, farewell!"

And at the same time flowers, some of which fell into the carriage, were thrown by the crowd that thronged the street, and from the windows. At these friendly cries and at this spectacle, Sand, who until then had shown no moment of weakness, felt tears rising in spite of himself, and while he returned the greetings made to him on all sides, he murmured in a low voice, "O my God, give me courage!"

This first outburst over, the procession set out amid deep silence; only now and again some single voice would call out, "Farewell, Sand!" and a handkerchief waved by some hand

that rose out of the crowd would show from what point the last call came. On each side of the chaise walked two of the prison officials, and behind the chaise came a second conveyance with the municipal authorities.

The air was very cold: it had rained all night, and the dark and cloudy sky seemed to share in the general sadness. Sand, too weak to remain sitting up, was half lying upon the shoulder of Mr. G——, his companion; his face was gentle, calm, and full of pain; his brow free and open; his features, interesting though without regular beauty, seemed to have aged by several years during the fourteen months of suffering that had just elapsed. The chaise at last reached the place of execution, which was surrounded by a battalion of infantry; Sand lowered his eyes from heaven to earth and saw the scaffold. At this sight he smiled gently, and as he left the carriage he said, "Well, God has given me strength so far."

The governor of the prison and the chief officials lifted him that he might go up the steps. During that short ascent pain kept him bowed, but when he had reached the top he stood erect again, saying, "Here then is the place where I am to die!"

Then before he came to the chair on which he was to be seated for the execution, he turned his eyes towards Mannheim, and his gaze travelled over all the throng that surrounded him; at that moment a ray of sunshine broke through the clouds. Sand greeted it with a smile and sat down.

Then, as, according to the orders given, his sentence was to be read to him a second time, he was asked whether he felt strong enough to hear it standing. Sand answered that he would try, and that if his physical strength failed him, his moral strength would uphold him. He rose immediately from the fatal chair, begging Mr. G—— to stand near enough to support him if he should chance to stagger. The precaution was unnecessary, Sand did not stagger.

After the judgment had been read, he sat down again and said in a loud voice, "I die trusting in God."

But at these words Mr. G—— interrupted him.

"Sand," said he, "what did you promise?"

"True," he answered; "I had forgotten." He was silent, therefore, to the crowd; but raising his right hand and extending it solemnly in the air, he said in a low voice, so that he might be heard only by those who were around him, "I take God to witness that I die for the freedom of Germany."

Then, with these words, he did as Conradin did with his glove; he threw his rolled-up handkerchief over the line of soldiers around him, into the midst of the people.

Then the executioner came to cut off his hair; but Sand at first objected.

"It is for your mother," said Mr. Widemann.

"On your honour, sir?" asked Sand.

"On my honour."

"Then do it," said Sand, offering his hair to the executioner.

Only a few curls were cut off, those only which fell at the back, the others were tied with a ribbon on the top of the head. The executioner then tied his hands on his breast, but as that position was oppressive to him and compelled him on account of his wound to bend his head, his hands were laid flat on his thighs and fixed in that position with ropes. Then, when his eyes were about to be bound, he begged Mr. Widemann to place the bandage in such a manner that he could see the light to his last moment. His wish was fulfilled.

Then a profound and mortal stillness hovered over the whole crowd and surrounded the scaffold. The executioner drew his sword, which flashed like lightning and fell. Instantly a terrible cry rose at once from twenty thousand bosoms; the head had not fallen, and though it had sunk towards the breast still held to the neck. The executioner struck a second time, and struck off at the same blow the head and a part of the hand.

In the same moment, notwithstanding the efforts of the soldiers, their line was broken through; men and women rushed upon the scaffold, the blood was wiped up to the last drop with handkerchiefs; the chair upon which Sand had sat was broken and divided into pieces, and those who could not obtain

one, cut fragments of bloodstained wood from the scaffold itself.

The head and body were placed in a coffin draped with black, and carried back, with a large military escort, to the prison. At midnight the body was borne silently, without torches or lights, to the Protestant cemetery, in which Kotzebue had been buried fourteen months previously. A grave had been mysteriously dug; the coffin was lowered into it, and those who were present at the burial were sworn upon the New Testament not to reveal the spot where Sand was buried until such time as they were freed from their oath. Then the grave was covered again with the turf, that had been skilfully taken off, and that was relaid on the same spot, so that no new grave could be perceived; then the nocturnal gravediggers departed, leaving guards at the entrance.

There, twenty paces apart, Sand and Kotzebue rest: Kotzebue opposite the gate in the most conspicuous spot of the cemetery, and beneath a tomb upon which is engraved this inscription:—

"The world persecuted him without pity,
Calumny was his sad portion,
He found no happiness save in the arms of his wife,
And no repose save in the bosom of death.
Envy dogged him to cover his path with thorns,
Love bade his roses blossom;
May Heaven pardon him
As he pardons earth!"

In contrast with this tall and showy monument, standing, as we have said, in the most conspicuous spot of the cemetery, Sand's grave must be looked for in the corner to the extreme left of the entrance gate; and a wild plum tree, some leaves of which every passing traveller carries away, rises alone upon the grave, which is devoid of any inscription.

As for the meadow in which Sand was executed, it is still called by the people "*Sand's Himelfartsweise*," which signifies "The meadow of Sand's ascension."

Towards the end of September 1838 we were at Mannheim

where I had stayed three days in order to collect all the details I could find about the life and death of Karl-Ludwig Sand. But at the end of these three days, in spite of my active investigations, these details still remained extremely incomplete, either because I applied in the wrong quarters, or because, being a foreigner, I inspired some distrust in those to whom I applied. I was leaving Mannheim, therefore, somewhat disappointed, and after having visited the little Protestant cemetery where Sand and Kotzebue are buried at twenty paces from each other, I had ordered my driver to take the road to Heidelberg, when, after going a few yards, he, who knew the object of my inquiries, stopped of himself and asked me whether I should not like to see the place where Sand was executed. At the same time he pointed to a little mound situated in the middle of a meadow and a few steps from a brook. I assented eagerly, and although the driver remained on the highroad with my travelling companions, I soon recognised the spot indicated, by means of some relics of cypress branches, immortelles, and forget-me-nots scattered upon the earth. It will readily be understood that this sight, instead of diminishing my desire for information, increased it. I was feeling, then, more than ever dissatisfied at going away, knowing so little, when I saw a man of some five-and-forty to fifty years old, who was walking at a little distance from the place where I myself was, and who, guessing the cause that drew me thither, was looking at me with curiosity. I determined to make a last effort, and going up to him, I said, "Oh, sir, I am a stranger; I am travelling to collect all the rich and poetic traditions of your Germany. By the way in which you look at me, I guess that you know which of them attracts me to this meadow. Could you give me any information about the life and death of Sand?"

"With what object, sir?" the person to whom I spoke asked me in almost unintelligible French.

"With a very German object, be assured, sir," I replied. "From the little I have learned, Sand seems to me to be one of those ghosts that appear only the greater and the more

poetic for being wrapped in a shroud stained with blood. But he is not known in France; he might be put on the same level there with a Fieschi or a Meunier, and I wish, to the best of my ability, to enlighten the minds of my countrymen about him."

"It would be a great pleasure to me, sir, to assist in such an undertaking; but you see that I can scarcely speak French; you do not speak German at all; so that we shall find it difficult to understand each other."

"If that is all," I returned, "I have in my carriage yonder an interpreter, or rather an interpretress, with whom you will, I hope, be quite satisfied, who speaks German like Goethe, and to whom, when you have once begun to speak to her, I defy you not to tell everything."

"Let us go, then, sir," answered the pedestrian. "I ask no better than to be agreeable to you."

We walked towards the carriage, which was still waiting on the highroad, and I presented to my travelling companion the new recruit whom I had just gained. The usual greetings were exchanged, and the dialogue began in the purest Saxon. Though I did not understand a word that was said, it was easy for me to see, by the rapidity of the questions and the length of the answers, that the conversation was most interesting. At last, at the end of half an hour, growing desirous of knowing to what point they had come, I said, "Well?"

"Well," answered my interpreter, "you are in luck's way, and you could not have asked a better person."

"The gentleman knew Sand, then?"

"The gentleman is the governor of the prison in which Sand was confined."

"Indeed?"

"For nine months—that is to say, from the day he left the hospital—this gentleman saw him every day."

"Excellent!"

"But that is not all: this gentleman was with him in the carriage that took him to execution; this gentleman was with him on the scaffold; there's only one portrait of Sand in all Mannheim, and this gentleman has it."

I was devouring every word; a mental alchemist, I was opening my crucible and finding gold in it.

"Just ask," I resumed eagerly, "whether the gentleman will allow us to take down in writing the particulars that he can give me."

My interpreter put another question, then turning towards me, said, "Granted."

Mr. G—— got into the carriage with us, and instead of going on to Heidelberg, we returned to Mannheim, and alighted at the prison.

Mr. G—— did not once depart from the ready kindness that he had shown. In the most obliging manner, patient over the minutest trifles, and remembering most happily, he went over every circumstance, putting himself at my disposal like a professional guide. At last, when every particular about Sand had been sucked dry, I began to ask him about the manner in which executions were performed. "As to that," said he, "I can offer you an introduction to someone at Heidelberg who can give you all the information you can wish for upon the subject."

I accepted gratefully, and as I was taking leave of Mr. G——, after thanking him a thousand times, he handed me the offered letter. It bore this superscription: 'To Herr-doctor Widemann, No. 111 High Street, Heidelberg.'

I turned to Mr. G—— once more.

"Is he, by chance, a relation of the man who executed Sand?" I asked.

"He is his son, and was standing by when the head fell."

"What is his calling, then?"

"The same as that of his father, whom he succeeded."

"But you call him 'doctor'?"

"Certainly; with us, executioners have that title."

"But, then, doctors of what?"

"Of surgery."

"Really?" said I. "With us it is just the contrary: surgeons are called executioners."

"You will find him, moreover," added Mr. G——, "a very

distinguished young man, who, although he was very young at that time, has retained a vivid recollection of that event. As for his poor father, I think he would as willingly have cut off his own right hand as have executed Sand; but if he had refused, someone else would have been found. So he had to do what he was ordered to do, and he did his best."

I thanked Mr. G——, fully resolving to make use of his letter, and we left for Heidelberg, where we arrived at eleven in the evening.

My first visit next day was to Dr. Widemann. It was not without some emotion, which, moreover, I saw reflected upon the faces of my travelling companions, that I rang at the door of the last judge, as the Germans call him. An old woman opened the door to us, and ushered us into a pretty little study, on the left of a passage and at the foot of a staircase, where we waited while Mr. Widemann finished dressing. This little room was full of curiosities, madrepores, shells, stuffed birds, and dried plants; a double-barrelled gun, a powder-flask, and a game-bag showed that Mr. Widemann was a hunter.

After a moment we heard his footstep, and the door opened. Mr. Wideman was a very handsome young man, of thirty or thirty-two, with black whiskers entirely surrounding his manly and expressive face; his morning dress showed a certain rural elegance. He seemed at first not only embarrassed but pained by our visit. The aimless curiosity of which he seemed to be the object was indeed odd. I hastened to give him Mr. G——'s letter and to tell him what reason brought me. Then he gradually recovered himself, and at last showed himself no less hospitable and obliging towards us than he to whom we owed the introduction had been, the day before.

Mr. Widemann then gathered together all his remembrances; he too had retained a vivid recollection of Sand, and he told us among other things that his father, at the risk of bringing himself into ill odour, had asked leave to have a new scaffold made at his own expense, so that no other criminal might be executed upon the altar of the martyr's death. Permission had been given, and Mr. Widemann had used the wood

of the scaffold for the doors and windows of a little country house standing in a vineyard. Then for three or four years this cottage became a shrine for pilgrims; but after a time, little by little, the crowd grew less, and at the present day, when some of those who wiped the blood from the scaffold with their handkerchiefs have become public functionaries, receiving salaries from Government, only foreigners ask, now and again, to see these strange relics.

Mr. Widemann gave me a guide; for, after hearing everything, I wanted to see everything. The house stands half a league away from Heidelberg, on the left of the road to Carlsruhe, and half-way up the mountain-side. It is perhaps the only monument of the kind that exists in the world.

Our readers will judge better from this anecdote than from anything more we could say, what sort of man he was who left such a memory in the hearts of his gaoler and his executioner.

END OF VOL. II.

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